THE IMPACT OF EHR BURDENS ON PHYSICIAN BURNOUT

Physician burnout is associated with two-fold increased odds for unsafe care, unprofessional behaviors, and low patient satisfaction according to one study.[1] Another study concludes that electronic health records (EHR) are a leading factor in physician burnout due to the increased clerical burden and reduced efficiency associated with them.[2] Like many other healthcare issues, preventing physician burnout is cheaper and safer than managing the downstream consequences. In this special report, the risk management experts at NORCAL offer strategies to address stress caused by EHRs.

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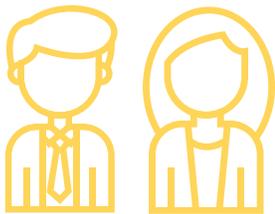# BURNOUT BY THE NUMBERS: EHR A CHIEF CONTRIBUTOR

77.8%
Physicians who have feelings of professional burnout[3]

40.1%
often or always[3]

37.7%
sometimes[3]

Nearly twice —
Prevalence of burnout among **physicians** vs. **other U.S. workers**[4]

39.2%
Physicians who find EHR design/interoperability the **least satisfying aspect of medical practice**[3]

78.7% — Physicians who find patient relationships the most satisfying aspect of medical practice[3]
Yet **65.7%** — Physicians indicating that EHR negatively affects patient relationships[3]

PHYSICIANS' WEEKLY HOURS ARE LONG AND HEAVY WITH NON-CLINICAL DUTIES[3]

54.3% work more than **50 hours**

28.2% work more than **60 hours**

12.5% work more than **70 hours**

46.4% spent 11+ hours
on non-clinical duties each week

$500,000 TO MORE THAN $1M
Potential cost to replace a physician who leaves due to burnout[5]

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EHR BURDENS

A 2016 study evaluating the relationship between the electronic environment and physician burnout concluded that electronic health records have reduced efficiency, increased clerical burden, and increased the risk of burnout for physicians.[2]

The NORCAL Professional Wellness site at norcal-group.com/wellness offers practical strategies for managing stress and preventing physician burnout, including details on the following **"Solutions to Reduce EHR Burdens and Decrease Physician Burnout."**

1   Work with IT staff to improve EHR usability and decrease administrative burden.

2   Convince administrators and physician leaders that EHR usability issues require solutions.

3   Encourage EHR designers to make systems more clinically relevant.

4   Support organizations advocating for EHR clinical relevance and usability.

5   Use a live or virtual scribe to decrease feelings of isolation and increase engagement with patients.

6   Share data collection duties with others to reduce clerical burden.

7   Develop EHR expertise to promote increased satisfaction with existing EHRs.

8   Improve EHR patient engagement skills and transform the EHR into a patient engagement tool.

9   Talk to colleagues directly to help mitigate the social isolation an EHR can produce.

10   Focus on the positive benefits EHRs have to offer.

Numbered references available at norcal-group.com/library/the-impact-of-ehr-burdens-on-physician-burnout

This report is presented as a courtesy by NORCAL Group. Our Risk Management Specialists are always ready to help policy-holders with risk issues and to support practice changes that lower risk and improve patient safety.

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