

**SPECIAL REPORT**



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## 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.<sup>1</sup> Another study shows that electronic health records (EHR) contribute to physician burnout due to the increased clerical burden that disrupts the time spent with patients.<sup>2</sup> 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.



# BURNOUT BY THE NUMBERS: EHR A CHIEF CONTRIBUTOR



# 77.8%

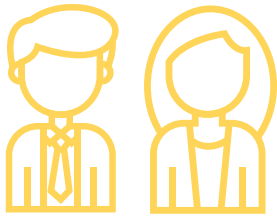
Physicians who have feelings of professional burnout<sup>3</sup>

# 40.1%

often or always<sup>3</sup>

# 37.7%

sometimes<sup>3</sup>



**Nearly twice** —  
Prevalence of burnout among  
**physicians** vs. **other U.S. workers**<sup>4</sup>



# 39.2%

Physicians who find EHR design/interoperability the **least satisfying aspect of medical practice**<sup>3</sup>

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

## PHYSICIANS' WEEKLY HOURS ARE LONG AND HEAVY WITH NON-CLINICAL DUTIES<sup>3</sup>



**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<sup>5</sup>

## RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EHR BURDENS

A study evaluating the impact of health information technology—and specifically EHRs—on physician stress and burnout found that EHR use contributes to physician burnout due to the increased clerical burden that disrupts the time spent with patients.<sup>2</sup>



The NORCAL Professional Wellness site at [norcal-group.com/wellness](https://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.

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

## ABOUT NORCAL GROUP

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