

# The New CMS

## 7 Strategies to Achieve Work-Life Balance



The CMS Committee on Wellness is deeply concerned that burnout and work-life balance satisfaction among U.S. physicians is getting worse. The latest study shows that more than half of U.S. physicians experience professional burnout symptoms. Given the extensive evidence that burnout effects quality of care, safety and patient satisfaction, CMS is dedicated to addressing systemic contributing factors in the practice environment and helping physicians to care for themselves. We recommend that you:

1

### **Prioritize what you value, and plan for it.**

Spend more time in planning, preparing and personal development and less time in the “crisis/deadline mode,” which fosters frenzy and imbalance. Suggested reading: “First Things First,” by Stephen Covey.

2

### **Give yourself time to “just be” and feel rooted in the moment.**

Perpetual “doing” ends up depleting us, leading to exhaustion and burnout. Through mindfulness, or focusing our awareness on the present moment, we nourish the body and mind. Consider creating a gratitude journal. Every day, list three things you are grateful for and why. Studies show this simple activity improves sleep, increases happiness and lessens depression.

3

### **Learn to say “no” to certain tasks, particularly when they are misaligned with your own values.**

Saying no is a way to set boundaries and avoid falling prey to overcommitting or overextending yourself. “No” is an essential step to creating more balance and ensuring you have time to prioritize your wellbeing.

4

### **Practice self-care, focusing on small, actionable steps.**

Start by exercising and getting proper sleep. If you do not have time for yoga or the gym, online exercise classes or instructions are options. Keep the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual in balance. Realize that all four need to be engaged. Check out the CMS Physician Wellness Toolkit at [www.cms.org/articles/category/physician-wellness](http://www.cms.org/articles/category/physician-wellness).

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### **Encourage your employer to measure workplace satisfaction.**

Seventy five percent of U.S. physicians are now employed by large health care organizations. Improving efficiency and support in the practice environment will increase workplace satisfaction. The Mini Z survey developed by Dr. Mark Linzer is one way to measure physician experiences. The Mayo Clinic’s “Listen-Act-Develop” model is another strategy to reduce burnout and involve physicians in an organization’s design and mission.

6

### **Learn concrete ways in which to slow the digital fire hose.**

Create digital limits from work or peers so you can properly rejuvenate. There are specific techniques that can be used to filter and organize information. Suggested reading: “4 Steps to Deal with Digital Overload,” [www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/wired-workplace/2016/02/4-steps-deal-digital-overload/125767/](http://www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/wired-workplace/2016/02/4-steps-deal-digital-overload/125767/).

7

### **On a yearly basis, review volunteer, charity or community service obligations that are taking up time.**

Be honest with yourself about what you are interested in and committed to. Eliminate those activities that you no longer find fulfilling. This frees up time to pursue other avenues, including self-care!

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Stay tuned to CMS communications to learn more about these important issues, follow our progress and learn how you can get involved.

We want to hear from you and are available to answer your questions. Please contact CMS President Michael Volz, MD, at [president@cms.org](mailto:president@cms.org).

