

Primary Care Clinic Organization and Physician Burnout in Western, NC

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What is Burnout Exactly?

"Burnout is a long-term stress reaction characterized by depersonalization, including cynical or negative attitudes toward patients, emotional exhaustion, a feeling of decreased personal achievement and a lack of empathy for patients."

—AMA

Burnout is helped little, or sometimes not at all, by taking a break or time off. It's more serious than "just" feeling tired or exhausted.

Burnout Consequences

- Physician burnout has increased from 40% to 51% in the last 4 years, with family medicine ranking the 3rd highest specialty for burnout prevalence
- Burnout reduces quality of care and increases the likelihood of medical errors
- Burnout is of special concern in rural primary care where retention is a challenge and backup is limited

The Question

What changes can be made at the clinic administration level with burnout in mind to lessen physician workload and increase efficiency without decreasing the financial sustainability of the practice?

Survey Focus

I surveyed primary care providers in WNC on burnout and clinic organization, including issues of staffing and workload.

Burnout

- Job Satisfaction
- Stress level
- Workload Control
- Practice Atmosphere
- Team dynamics
- % of patient care time spent on EHR & administrative tasks

Clinic Organization

Staffing:

- # patients/day
- % Chronic vs. Acute
- Hours/week in patient care
- % patient care on EHR

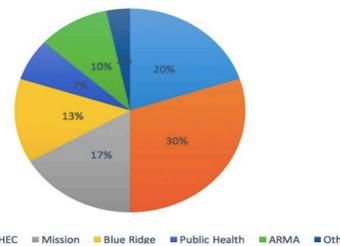
Workload:

- Providers in practice
- Active providers at a time
- Support staff per provider
- Medical scribe
- Administrative support
- Complementary providers (e.g. PT, Behavioral Health)

Survey Participant Demographics

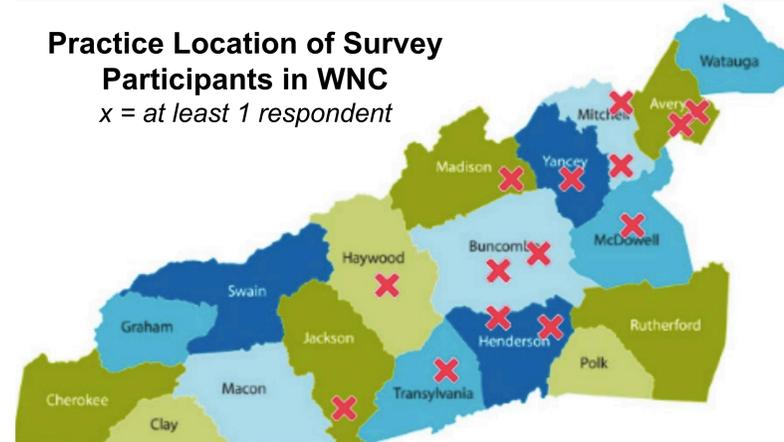
- N = 30
- Average age = 47.2
- Average years in position = 11.4

Provider Affiliation



Practice Location of Survey Participants in WNC

x = at least 1 respondent



Notable Relationships to Burnout

In order of strength:

- % of patient care time spent on EHR, $r = .66$, $p < .0012$.
- Perception of fair compensation, $r = .61$, $p < .0013$.
- Financial stress, $r = .50$, $p = .0054$.
- Face-to-face time with patient, $r = -.47$, $p = .0086$.
- Total Workload, $r = .37$, $p = .066$

Notable absence of relationship:

- Years at current position, $r = -.04$
- Hours worked/week, $r = .03$
- % of Chronic (vs. acute) patients, $r = .07$

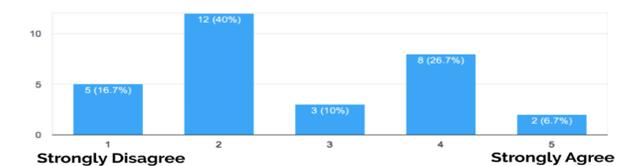
Top 5 Challenges to Work-Life Balance

- Burden of Documentation & Administrative Tasks
- Compensation & Financial Success of Practice
- General Workload
- Support Staff
- Lack of control over work flow

The Lay of the Land

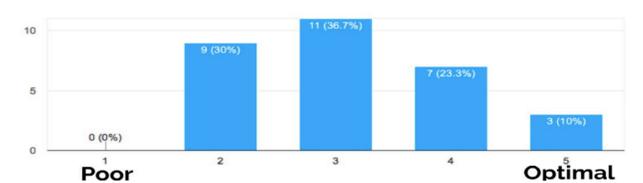
I worry about the financial success and sustainability of my practice.

30 responses



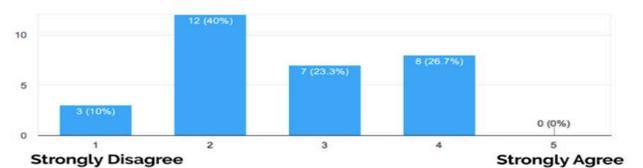
My control over my workload is:

30 responses



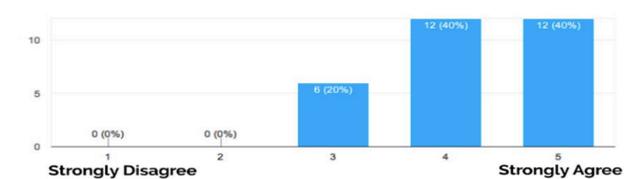
I feel a great deal of stress because of my job.

30 responses



Overall I am satisfied with my job.

30 responses



Take Home Points

- Provide Documentation & Administrative support (e.g. a scribe)
- Maximize Face-to-face contact (vs. data entry time)
- Physician-specific scheduling (vs. remote scheduler)
- Put money into Primary Care

Thank you!

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