



# ACPH 2023

American Conference on Physician Health

## Conference Report

Oct. 11-13, 2023 | Palm Desert, Calif.



**Sponsored jointly by Stanford Medicine, the American Medical Association and Mayo Clinic, the fourth American Conference on Physician Health took place Oct. 11–13, 2023, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, Calif.**

The conference, which attracted more than 600 attendees from across the country, brought physicians, researchers, and other health care leaders and influencers together for three days of dynamic learning, shared knowledge and actionable insights. Attendees participated in interactive workshops, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and oral and poster presentations focused on creating and sustaining collaborative and satisfying work environments.





## The event

Focusing on the timely theme of **“Building the workplace of the future,”** the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health was a great success. Its record attendance further underscores the continued need for a conference focused on how to improve physician well-being. The conference showcased abstracts on the latest research on effective burnout reduction tactics and offered concrete strategies to help individuals and organizations build the type of infrastructure that optimizes physician performance and satisfaction.

## Program overview and key findings

For its 622 attendees from around the nation, the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health provided a multitude of opportunities for physicians and researchers to learn, discuss, network and broaden their horizons.

Through oral presentations, keynotes, poster and plenary sessions, an abundance of actionable insights, relevant information and inspiring perspectives were shared with a highly engaged audience. Judging from the physician attendee feedback (see page 5, “Testimonials and comments”), the conference scored a direct hit—both in meeting expectations and in advancing the discussion.

The event provided a forum for clinicians and researchers to present recent research findings, innovative methods and educational programs around physicians’ professional well-being in the following areas of physician health:

1. EHR
2. Interventions for the individual
3. Local work unit
4. Organizational level
5. External factors



## Host organizations

The 2023 American Conference on Physician Health was sponsored jointly by Stanford Medicine, the American Medical Association and Mayo Clinic.



## Sponsor and exhibitors

Thank you to our premier supporter:



Thank you to our silver supporter:



We'd also like to thank the many exhibitors who helped support the conference and further the message and practice of physician health:

	AAMC StandPoint Surveys		Prosology
	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention		The Well-Being Index
	Compassion Institute		UC San Diego Health
	Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation		UC San Diego – Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion
	Healing Breaths		VITAL WorkLife
	Pause and Presence LLC		

# Statistics and survey results

**622**  
attendees

**5**  
plenary and  
keynote sessions

**94**  
abstracts  
(14 workshops and 80  
oral presentations)

**126**  
posters

## How well did the meeting satisfy your expectations with regards to the following objectives?

Overall, how would you rate this year's ACPH?



Overall, how would you rate the breakout sessions offered at this meeting?



The meeting was a valuable use of my time.



The meeting helped me feel engaged.



I would recommend future ACPH meetings to my peers.



## Testimonials and comments

“Overall nice mix of presentations and a great group of friendly attendees all motivated by well-being. Easy access to exhibitors allowed lots of opportunity to learn more. My team looks forward to attending again.”

“Great mix of presentations—wonderful, idea-generating poster session. The plenary about physician health programs was outstanding.”

“I very much liked having multiple options each session to explore interventions at the organizational, local/department and individual levels.”

“The speakers were excellent. Especially appreciated learning more about physician health programs. Great opportunity to network and this is the most collaborative group I’ve ever been a part of. It was easy to talk to presenters and attendees.”

“Opportunity to network. I liked the breakout format—hearing from three speakers—really got a lot of info in a short amount of time.”

“Many opportunities for meaningful interaction during and outside of sessions, well-paced meetings with regular breaks. Generally excellent collegiality. Truly excellent food and beautiful venue.”



## Speakers and key messages

### Opening keynote (day one)



**Liselotte (Lotte) Dyrbye, MD, MHPE**  
Senior associate dean of faculty and chief well-being officer  
University of Colorado School of Medicine

#### Building the workforce of the future

There is a persistent issue of burnout among medical students and residents, with rates increasing among physicians. This burnout has significant consequences, affecting the behavior, beliefs, decision-making, and performance of residents and students. In Dr. Dyrbye's opening keynote, she emphasized the importance of cultivating a trustworthy, respectful, and supportive environment for learners and residents, while advocating for the well-being and development of faculty and educators.

The impact of the work environment on burnout and well-being, particularly for residents, is substantial. Faculty, education leaders, and decanal teams are pivotal in providing a support system and exemplifying wellness behaviors through mentoring, refining leadership skills, and promoting self-care. The burnout in learners affects them personally and professionally, and all are empowered to go forward and improve the work in the learning environment for the physicians of the future.

### Closing keynote (day three)



**Christine Sinsky, MD**  
Vice president, professional satisfaction  
American Medical Association

#### Reorienting health care around relationships to achieve Quadruple Aim outcomes

According to Dr. Sinsky, AMA vice president of professional satisfaction, the key to a strong health care system is relational. Within health care teams and with patients, these connections serve as the "secret sauce," providing both individual and systemic resilience. Strengthening these connections enhances the system's

ability to support and serve its people. Relationships should be viewed as a superpower, which increases quality and decreases burnout. Dr. Sinsky highlighted several ways health systems can prioritize relationships through face-to-face communication, reconstruction of physical spaces, wave scheduling, reengineering workflows, transferring work and removing the "sludge" in the EHR inbox, and supporting collegiality. Strengthening relationships not only leads to increased patient and physician satisfaction, but also contributes to lower health care costs. Potential is unlimited when the power of connection is unleashed.



**Christopher Bundy, MD, MPH**  
Executive medical director  
Washington Physicians Health Program



**Carrie Cunningham, MD, MPH**  
Associate professor of surgery  
Harvard Medical School

#### Physician health programs: A candid conversation

In this session, learners had an unprecedented opportunity to experience a candid dialogue between a physician health program (PHP) medical director and a current PHP participant as they explored the life-altering benefits and legitimate criticisms of PHPs. Through this dialogue, Drs. Bundy and Cunningham engaged learners in strategies to strengthen and support PHP best practices in their communities. Some action steps discussed were contacting your state PHP proactively to learn more about how it operates and who is served; requesting an outreach meeting or presentation from your state PHP; developing clear policies and procedures that direct referrals to PHP when concerns of impairment arise; working collaboratively with your PHP to assure that it is adequately funded to support its mission; and advocating with your PHP to reduce barriers to help-seeking among physicians and other health care professionals.



**Jane Fogg, MD, MPH**

Senior physician advisor, American Medical Association  
Lecturer, Harvard Medical School



**Adam Rule, PhD, MS**

Assistant professor, Information School  
University of Wisconsin – Madison



**Mickey Trockel, MD, PhD**

Director, evidence based innovation  
Stanford Medicine WellMD Center



**Katie Godfrey, PhD**

Director, Center for WorkLife Wellbeing  
ChristianaCare



**Colin P. West, MD, PhD**

General internist and biostatistician  
Mayo Clinic

**Measuring and redesigning EHR use: A systems-level approach to physician well-being**

In this plenary session, Drs. Fogg and Rule shared how organizations can combine systems-level thinking with recurring measurement to redesign clinical workflows and promote physician well-being. Dr. Fogg shared her experience employing four different strategies—eliminate, automate, delegate, collaborate—to cut primary care physicians’ in basket volume by 25% at Atrius Health. Dr. Rule shared how automated measurement of EHR use can enable organizations to quantify diverse aspects of both EHR use (e.g., inbox volume, EHR time) and clinic workflow (e.g., team contributions to orders, message response time) unobtrusively and at scale. By combining systems-level thinking and ongoing measurement of EHR use, organizations can drive change and enhance physician well-being.

**Catalyzing post-traumatic recovery: Identifying and mitigating distress associated with medical practice**

During the plenary session, Drs. Trockel, Godfrey and West explored how trauma, social isolation and lack of strong relationships have contributed to physician burnout. During the pandemic, a significant amount of division and distrust emerged, posing harm as physicians heavily depended on one another. Some common risk factors for occupational well-being among physicians encompass low self-valuation, imposter phenomenon, isolation, and the impact of work on personal relationships. It was stated that understanding trauma is essential, as traumatic effects influence feelings and thoughts. Physicians reported higher feelings of isolation than the general population, and efforts to mitigate loneliness and isolation in physicians need more attention. The trauma of the pandemic shattered beliefs, requiring a healing process that includes fostering hope, safety, calming, social connection and self and community efficacy.

**Summation**

While the conference was successful within its three-day scope, prioritizing physician health and well-being in daily practice takes commitment that is strong, informed and operates on two levels.

- **Personal commitment:** Everyone in the health care profession takes the necessary time required to focus on their own health.
- **Professional commitment:** Medicine must keep this issue—and the quest for meaningful, actionable solutions—on its agenda front and center.

We hope the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health findings will not only serve as a reminder of the important work and research that has been done, but also continue to push the vital goal of promoting physician well-being in the years to come.

## Committees

### Program planning committee

Ashley Cummings, MBA, PMP (AMA)

Lotte Dyrbye, MD, MHPE (University of Colorado)

Stana Manojlovic (AMA)

Jennifer Mathews (AMA)

Lori Ramos-Petkofski (AMA)

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Mickey Trockel, MD, PhD (Stanford Medicine)

Michael Tutty, PhD, MHA (AMA)

Colin West, MD, PhD (Mayo Clinic)

Julia Wilkens, MBA (AMA)

### Abstract review committee

**Chairs:** Lotte Dyrbye, MD, MPHE, and Mickey Trockel, MD, PhD

Gaurava Agarwal, MD

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Jon Ripp, MD, MPH

Lisa Rotenstein, MD, MBA

Miriam Stewart, MD

Daniel Tawfik, MD

Larissa Thomas, MD, MPH

Susan Thompson-Hingle, MD

## Mark your calendars!

Please plan to join us at the next American Conference on Physician Health

**Sept. 11–13, 2025**

at the Boston Marriott Copley Place in Boston, Mass.

Email [physicianhealth@ama-assn.org](mailto:physicianhealth@ama-assn.org) to be placed on the conference mailing list and receive timely event updates, including when the call for abstracts opens.