



**Northwell Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and
Physician's Resource Network (PRN)
Physician Stress and Burnout – Running on Empty**

“Physicians are often prone to burnout because of their personality profiles. We want people who are driven, who are competitive, and who can excel in everything they do.” What happens when they get into practice? They try to do everything, and they have this complex which also says they must succeed at everything.”

T. Jock Murray, M.D., Director at Medical Humanities Program, Dalhousie University

Consequences of Physician Burnout

Burnout is a term used to describe the experience of emotional exhaustion, increased cynicism and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Despite many physicians achieving personal and financial success, physicians are stressed and overworked and frequently unhappy.

The medical field is a highly demanding, challenging and constantly changing environment. Staff and patients depend upon physicians not only to be healers but also to be leaders. Not only must physicians contend with patient problems and long hours but also with paperwork, administrative duties and bureaucracy. Over the last 20 years, physicians have been pushed to adopt a business mentality which may conflict with providing the best possible care for their patients.

All this affects the way physicians feel about their profession. Many lose sight of career goals which have personal meaning. For many physicians, the depletion of energy and exhaustion lead to frustration, anger and cynicism and this can directly affect quality and patient care.

Self Care

Until now, physician “self-care” has not been part of physician training or physician culture. However, physician training must begin to address the serious issues of physician stress and burnout. The Northwell Health Physician's Resource Network can help physicians recognize the impact that stress and burnout may be having on their ability to practice medicine and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Sometimes the demands on the physician also take a toll on family members. PRN provides consultation to family members as well. To schedule a confidential consultation call PRN at 866-454-3280.