

April 6, 2020

On behalf of MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, and the Center for a Healthy Maryland, The Maryland State Medical Society Foundation, we want to express our steadfast motivation and enduring commitment to serve, support and advocate for all physicians throughout the state. At this time where we confront increased challenges and uncertainty, locally, nationally and globally with the COVID-19 crisis, we feel a heightened sense of obligation and a deeply-held allegiance for continuing to act as a resource, partner and agent for hospitals, practice groups and the individual physicians working tirelessly to serve the citizens of Maryland, so many of whom are risking their own well-being in service of caring for so many of us.

In our ongoing recognition of that, MedChi and the Center for a Healthy Maryland have remained fully operational so that we can be entirely available to you with any questions or concerns as it relates to the practice of medicine and beyond. We hope and encourage you to continue to call on us and make use of any and all resources that we offer including by communicating through our shared network and community of fellow peers and colleagues with whom we urge individuals to remain connected and engaged.

We are especially sensitive in our awareness that this can be a time of increased difficulty, isolation and anxiety for so many physicians and other healthcare professionals which then puts them at greater risk with personal vulnerabilities, maladaptive patterns and diminished self-care. We are also particularly mindful of the national epidemic and well-published prevalence of physician burnout and although promising recent data suggests some overall improvement with this trend, we are concerned that we may now lose traction of the gained momentum in that effort.

As we all know, the triad of physician burnout involves emotional exhaustion, a sense of depersonalization and feelings of ineffectiveness, each of which is associated with increased medical errors, decreased patient satisfaction and adverse outcomes along with higher rates of depression, substance use and suicidality. With all that we have learned anecdotally and through evidenced-based interventions about the importance of our shared responsibility among healthcare systems, other stakeholders and individual physicians in addressing and preventing professional burnout, we want to intensify our own efforts when we recognize they are needed the most.

Our Maryland Physician Health Program (MPHP) which is a 501(c)(3) charitable affiliate of MedChi through the Center for a Healthy Maryland maintains complete readiness by the specialized clinical staff to help, assist and support physicians and other healthcare professionals with any acute issues and stressors they may be experiencing due to the COVID-19 crisis or with more ongoing concerns and conditions, all through an independent, safe and confidential process. The MPHP clinical staff, who is currently available through a HIPAA-compliant videoconference platform, has access to numerous local and nationally available resources and is also closely working with a highly vetted and personalized network of community providers to ensure physicians and other healthcare professionals in need of such support can be easily connected.

At this unprecedented time when every physician and healthcare professional is so critically important, we are obligated to safeguard their sense of personal well-being, foster their resilience and bolster their

reserves. We encourage your administrative and clinical leadership to consult with the expertise of the MPHP staff regarding any individual or broader concerns as well as that you communicate and continue to refer physicians and other healthcare professionals who may benefit from additional help, care and support by calling 410.962.5580/800.992.7010 or emailing phpinfo@medchi.org

We are deeply grateful for the courage, dedication and sacrifice being exemplified by all those on the front lines taking care of their patients during this crisis over the challenging days and weeks ahead. We also greatly value and appreciate the continued partnership and collaboration we share with you and know you are equally committed to preserving and protecting the wellness and health of all our physicians and healthcare professionals throughout the state of Maryland.

Sincerely,

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MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society

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President
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