



The Maryland State Medical Society

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NEW SURVEY TRACKS COVID-19 AND PHYSICIAN WELL-BEING

By: Kurt Mosley, Vice President of Strategic Alliances at Merritt Hawkins

BALTIMORE, September 28, 2020 – In addition to the physical toll the coronavirus pandemic has taken on many Americans, it also has increased anxiety levels and eroded the mental health of a wide segment of the population.

A recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that almost half of all U.S. adults (45%) say the pandemic has affected their mental health, while 19% say it has had a “major impact.” (*The Impact of Coronavirus on Life in America. Kaiser Family Foundation. April, 2020*).

A new survey conducted by Merritt Hawkins, a collaborator of the Maryland State Medical Society, on behalf of The Physicians Foundation suggests that the mental health and well-being of physicians has been particularly impacted by Covid-19.

According to the survey:

- 30% of physicians have been made to feel hopeless or that they have no purpose as a result of Covid-19’s effects on their practice or employment situation
- 18% have increased use of medications, alcohol or illicit drugs as a result of Covid-19.
- 24% have sought medical attention for a physical problem
- 18% have sought mental healthcare
- 8% have considered self-harm
- 22% report they know a physician who has committed suicide

Merritt Hawkins conducts the national *Survey of America’s Physicians* every other year on behalf of The Physicians Foundation in order to track physician practice metrics, physician practice plans, and physicians’ perspectives on the medical profession.

This year, the survey is being released in three separate parts, each part focusing on how physicians are being affected by and responding to the pandemic. Part Two of the survey tracks how Covid-19 has affected physician well-being, and includes the findings above as well as additional data and analysis.

The survey paints a sobering portrait of a physician workforce that already was facing high levels of burnout and mental stress before the pandemic. Covid-19 has only added to the problem. The new survey provides additional evidence for why more needs to be done to ensure the physical and mental well-being of physicians and may be of interest to physicians, healthcare facility administrations and others concerned by this challenge.

Gene Ransom, MedChi CEO, wants to remind physicians about the availability of the Maryland Physicians Health Program (MPHP). Ransom states “MPHP is a private, confidential, nondisciplinary program that works to advocate for the health and well-being of all physicians in the state of Maryland, and to safeguard the public. The Program is administered by the Maryland State Medical Society’s charitable affiliate, the Center for a Healthy Maryland and is a great resource for physicians during these increasingly difficult times.”

MedChi members can obtain a complete report showing findings and analysis of Part Two of the *2020 Survey of America's Physicians* by contacting Merritt Hawkins Regional Vice President of Marketing at Jeremy.Robinson@merrithawkins.com.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.