

wheel

What Happens When Clinician Burnout Enters the Patient Exam Room?



Introduction

Long before we celebrated their sacrifice with a musical chorus of pots and pans, clinicians have been our unsung heroes.

But thanking clinicians for their unwavering commitment only goes so far. The overwhelming rates of clinician burnout have snowballed into a full-fledged crisis. **Nearly half of clinicians** reported feeling overwhelmed and overworked before the pandemic. Now, after asking them to serve on the front lines for more than a year, we have a duty to examine the long-term implications.

Wheel was founded on the belief that empowered and engaged clinicians lead to better patient outcomes. In other words, happier clinicians make healthier patients. With the pandemic forcing a catastrophic toll on clinicians' physical and mental health, we set out to better understand the long-term effects of clinician burnout on the patient experience.

QUESTIONS WE SET OUT TO ANSWER:

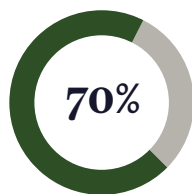
We surveyed 2,000 U.S. adults to examine how they've been impacted by clinician burnout...

- 1 Is clinician burnout so widespread that people are noticing if their doctor or nurse is exhausted or overwhelmed?
- 2 Do people still value working in healthcare?
- 3 Is our failure to support clinicians harming the health of our country?
- 4 Are patients contributing to clinician burnout?

HERE'S WHAT WE LEARNED:

Clinician Burnout Is Impacting the Patient Experience

Our healthcare workers are reeling from an incomprehensible amount of trauma, burnout, and grief – and clinician burnout has indeed entered the exam room. Patients are not only noticing that their doctor or nurse is stressed or overwhelmed, they're also growing concerned with how their quality of care may have been impacted.



70% of respondents said they were alarmed about high levels of stress and exhaustion among clinicians.



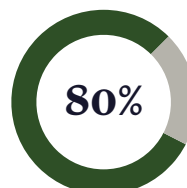
1 in 3

1 in 3 patients believe their quality of care may have been impacted by clinician burnout.



1 in 4

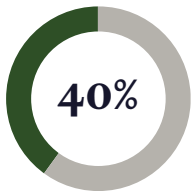
1 in 4 respondents said they experienced a healthcare visit that felt rushed.



80% of patients said their doctor or nurse seemed burned out during a healthcare visit over the last year.

Is Medical School Worth It? Maybe Not.

Outside of the exam room, patients are questioning what has been a historically lauded career. After watching front-line healthcare workers put their health and safety at risk throughout the pandemic, many are second-guessing whether it's still worth becoming a doctor or nurse.



shared they would not want their child to become a doctor or nurse.



1 in 3

do not believe that medical school is worth the investment.



1 in 4

personally know a clinician who would switch careers if they could.

Who Is To Blame?

As the hero-worship for clinicians has largely waned, the survey found the majority of respondents recognize their own behavior could be contributing to rising stress levels.



3 in 5

admit that clinicians are not being celebrated or recognized as "heroes" like they were at the beginning of the pandemic.



2 in 3

said the general public's resistance towards wearing masks and getting the vaccine has contributed to burnout.

Given the rise in people seeking mental health treatment, the survey showed that general practice clinicians may be taking on an additional burden that could be contributing to their stress levels. Many clinicians are also openly sharing their own challenges to find help for mental health needs.



1 in 3

patients have asked for mental help from a clinician that is not a mental health specialist.



1 in 8

respondents said their doctor or nurse disclosed they were struggling with their own mental health.



Our Takeaways

This survey confirmed our hypothesis: clinician burnout is affecting the patient experience and could be one of the long-term costs of the pandemic. We're now seeing the realities of what happens when we don't take care of the people who take care of us.

Just as concerning, **a significant portion of the public doesn't see the value in becoming a doctor or nurse.** Yet, we can't magically create millions of new healthcare workers overnight. If rates of medical school applications begin to decline, the healthcare industry will need to take a hard look in the mirror and acknowledge we're overdue for prioritizing the clinician experience.

This survey also confirmed our belief that **one of the most direct ways we can improve the patient experience is by starting with clinicians.** This is central to our work at Wheel, where our goal is to provide clinicians with the best place to work in virtual care. We offer clinicians with the flexibility to manage their own schedules, tools that foster more time with patients and less with paperwork, and the opportunity to provide for their families while gaining a priceless asset – time for themselves.

Methodology: The survey was conducted by PureSpectrum, an independent market research platform that gathers insights via online, nonprobability samples collected from panels in the PureSpectrum Marketplace. For more information on PureSpectrum's methodology, visit purespectrum.com.

To learn more about Wheel, please visit wheel.com