

Medical Staff Coaching Initiative

Executive Summary

We know from engagement surveys and personal observation that many physicians and APPs are languishing and experiencing the syndrome we abbreviate as burnout. Burnout in healthcare is a systems problem that manifests in individuals. We believe the crescendo of demands at an ever-increasing demand for speed and production, systemic constraints, and an unregulated, overly complex “cockpit” for medical professionals as well as cultural stigma prevent these providers from either seeking support when needed or transcending the circumstances of burnout. Because this professional group is so talented, high-functioning, and resilient, the appearance of impairment associated with their burnout may not be readily apparent until they leave their jobs or medicine entirely. We know this group needs support and a path back to engagement; we know we cannot afford to lose any more of our talented colleagues, and we know the remaining (surviving) professionals are at even higher risk when colleagues resign. We believe physician coaching by physicians bypasses the cultural stigma against receiving aid, provides much needed professional development, offers refinement of personal mission and values, and optimization of mental health and personal resiliency through the transformative nature of individual and small group work over a substantial period of time. Themes that came to light through the pilot are provided at the end for consideration of institution-specific drivers of burnout and professional dissatisfaction. This particular intervention was quite novel in that it was delivered to a diverse medical staff virtually and all coaches are also physicians. It is imminently study-able, replicable, and publishable. We believe this pioneering wellness work in the field of medicine directly supports the National Academy of Medicine’s Quadruple Aim in a meaningful, quantifiable way with potential to address massive financial losses in the form of turnover, discretionary effort, engagement, and more.

We have completed two 12-week cohorts for 160 providers total, and we are in the middle of a third with 70 additional providers at the time of this summary. Results have been impressive in terms of Wellbeing Index scores and self-reported impact statements. 90% say they would definitely recommend the program to a colleague. Many have described it as life changing and credited it with their ability to stay in medicine. We have 2 more sponsored cohorts planned, then we hope to offer an internal coaching resource in the future. Individuals and teams may also join future CFI cohorts by using CME funds, and other regions/divisions may opt to fund cohorts for med staff in the future as well. Organization sponsorship creates an opportunity for relational recovery in a time where that has been a challenging aspiration.

Details

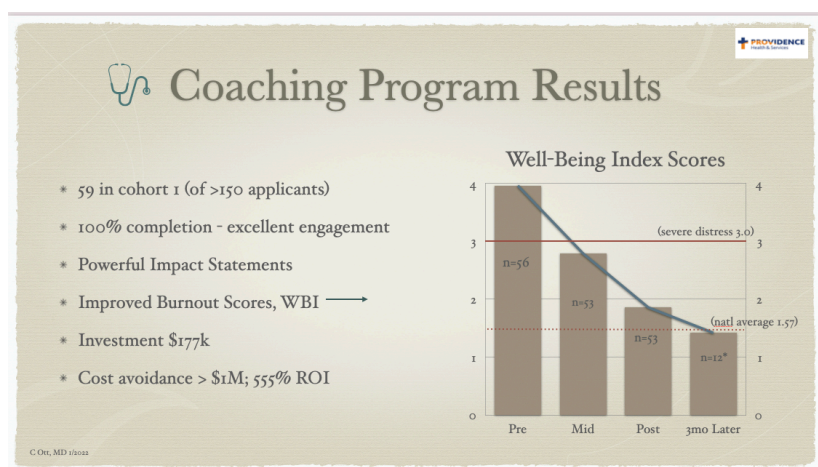
The specifics of our pilot included partnering with [Coaching for Institutions](#) include the following. All CFI coaches are certified coaches as well as physicians. The 12-week program consisted of 1 weekly didactic session as well as 1 hour of individual or small group coaching (alternating weeks) with an offer of 24 hours CME credit. A Well-Being Index was used to assess clinician distress levels pre- mid- and post- intervention. We used a wait list as the control group and future cross-over group. The cost was \$3000 per physician

(reduced from \$5000/participant due to volume) and was financed through a combination of funds from MEC (1/3) and Foundation support (2/3). A DEI-aware approach informed our selection of applicants along with severity of burnout expressed on applications and their potential to maximize the reach of this intervention. We did include medical staff who were non employed clinicians with privileges at our regional hospitals. We also included a payback provision if participants failed to access at least 75% of the sessions. All sessions were delivered virtually.

- 12 weeks, 24 hours CME
- 1 hour didactic per week + 1 hour coaching per week (individual and small group)
- Pre, Mid and Post Well Being Index
- Control and Cross Over Groups
- Cost: \$3000¹ per physician, Paid with funds from MECs and from Providence Foundation.

Outcomes Reporting:

The initial has been extremely well received. We had over 150 applicants for the first cohort of 60 spots.



Even the early skeptics among the cohort have expressed gratitude and surprise at how they have been able to change their mindset and move forward along their individual trajectories in both personal and professional realms. Some selected quotes from participants are included below. Even before our WBI scores were reported, a second cohort was planned with 95 spots for those who applied the first time and were not able to participate. An individual donor directed a gift of \$190,000 to support the foundation portion of the second cohort which speaks to the importance of

addressing this need in our provider community at this time. The hope and renewal in the quotes below speak for themselves. We are heartened and encouraged by these early outcome measures and recommend this process for wide replication and study.

These results have been presented at the International Conference on Physician Health and the Institute for Physician Wellness' Physician Coaching Summit. There is a manuscript in progress we hope to publish in the near future.

¹ Reduced from retail \$5000 due to volume.

Select Quotes from Participants

What's different for you since starting the program?

- “Over the past years, I had come to question whether medicine was a career I could sustain. Despite tremendous investment to prepare me for this complex and rewarding field, I found myself feeling empty. For me, the coaching initiative is providing a key step on my path back to medicine and hope for a long and fulfilling future.”
- “The care and comprehensive design of this program has offered me far more than other wellness initiatives I have encountered. I feel a shift in myself that I am hopeful will help me be a better doctor for years to come.”
- “I’m learning tools that are helping me get more present with what IS, not just with what arises instantaneously in my consciousness. I’m appreciating the opportunity to reflect and expand my understanding of my thoughts and reactions. The coaching with practice is priceless!”
- “We are only three weeks into the course, and I have already seen benefits. I am more aware of the damaging thoughts and resulting feelings that my brain is interpreting as fact--instead of simply the thoughts and feelings that they are. I am seeing the thought patterns that are leading me toward destruction rather than health. I am looking forward to continuing to work on the skills needed to choose different thoughts that then lead to feelings, actions, and results that I desire. I believe that the skills I gain will help in my relationships and allow me to better counsel my patients and families.”
- “I find great value in the way the structure of the program encourages time to reflect in several different formats - solitary daily journaling, interacting in a group coaching session, the in-depth opportunities of a 1:1 conversation with a physician coach, and the recorded weekly presentations from the director. We all have different experiences and perspectives, but in many ways we face similar daily challenges, and the coaches are able to help us notice the way these challenges make us think and feel. They give us tools to help us direct our behaviors and responses, in order to help shape our lives and move towards the goals we each envision. I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate and glad to hear that funding another cohort is being considered!”
- “I am setting more boundaries. And finally agreed to be CMD. “
- “I have become more optimistic about my role in medicine and leadership. I have become more aware that I control the narrative and not let others dictate my story. “
- “I thank patients for waiting for me rather than apologize for being late when I run behind schedule. I started an MBSR course, finally (instead of just reading, reading, reading). I am pursuing coaching certification. I am kinder to myself. I am getting more comfortable with vulnerability. I am discerning thoughts/feelings/body sensations that I previously would probably have ignored. I am getting better at recognizing and naming feelings. I have even more clarity on my personal career path than I would have thought possible. I am content.”
- “I feel more like the rider/trainer than the elephant.”
- “Deeply increased relationship with other leaders within Providence. Increased awareness of thought patterns. Increased awareness for feelings.”
- “Working on giving myself the same grace I give others. “
- “I am much more aware of my thoughts and feelings and how they affect how I feel in general. I feel so much better since starting this program, which surprises me!”