

*Lee County Medical Society*

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# Bulletin

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*Physicians Caring for Our Community*

4Q 2022 • Volume 46 • Issue 4





## BULLETIN

Lee County Medical Society is a Virtual Operation  
Mailbox address: 5781 Lee Boulevard, Suite 208-104  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971  
239.936.1645 • [www.lcmsfl.org](http://www.lcmsfl.org)

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### 4Q 2022 EDITOR

John W. Snead, MD

### MANAGING EDITOR

Julie Ramirez, Executive Director  
239.936.1645  
[jramirez@lcmsfl.org](mailto:jramirez@lcmsfl.org)

### MEMBERSHIP

Mariah Evans  
[admin@lcmsfl.org](mailto:admin@lcmsfl.org)

### MARKETING

Mollie Page  
[marketing@lcmsfl.org](mailto:marketing@lcmsfl.org)

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### Lee County Medical Society Mission Statement

*The mission of Lee County Medical Society is to advocate for physicians and their relationships with patients; promote public health and uphold the professionalism of the practice of medicine.*

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*Cover image taken in Bali, Indonesia submitted by Dr. Peter Sidell. Members are encouraged to submit photos to be considered for the Bulletin cover. Must be large format/300dpi. Email photos to [marketing@lcmsfl.org](mailto:marketing@lcmsfl.org)*

## STAFF RETIREMENT

Congratulations to **Valerie Yackulich**, Executive Assistant, in her upcoming retirement from Lee County Medical Society. Valerie has been with the Medical Society since June 2010. She and her family will be moving to Jacksonville, FL in December. Thank you, Valerie, for your hard work and loyalty to Lee County's physicians.

## HURRICANE RESOURCES

LCMS continues to update a special webpage with helpful hurricane information and resources for physicians, practices and staff.

[www.lcmsfl.org/reliefresources](http://www.lcmsfl.org/reliefresources)

## NEW SUPPORT STAFF

In the coming weeks, you will likely encounter two new local professionals who will assist the Society with administrative support.

**Mariah Evans** ([admin@lcmsfl.org](mailto:admin@lcmsfl.org)) will be our new Membership Coordinator and **Mollie Page** ([marketing@lcmsfl.org](mailto:marketing@lcmsfl.org)) will take charge as the Marketing Coordinator.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**FRI, DEC 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00PM - 9:30PM**

**LCMS Holiday Party**  
Forest Country Club  
6100 Club Blvd. SW, Fort Myers, FL

**FRI, JAN 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:30PM - 8:00PM**  
**& SAT, JAN 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:30AM - NOON**

**LCMS Physician Retreat**  
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**RVSP to LCMS events at [www.lcmsfl.org](http://www.lcmsfl.org)**

## NEW MEMBERS AS OF NOVEMBER 17, 2022



**Jonathan Anthony, DO**  
Orthopedic Trauma Surgery  
Orthopedic Specialists of SW Fla  
2531 Cleveland Ave., Ste. 1  
Ft. Myers, FL 33901  
239-334-7000 fax: 239-334-7070  
www.ossvf.com



**Robert Herenstein, MD**  
Anesthesiology  
US Anesthesia Partners  
13350 Metro Pkwy., Ste. 301  
Ft. Myers, FL 33966  
www.usap.com



**Luis Rodriguez, MD**  
Pediatric Primary Care  
Lee Physician Group  
2484 Caring Way, Ste. F  
Port Charlotte, FL 33952  
941-235-4920



**Jacob Benedict, MD**  
Otolaryngology  
Ear Nose and Throat Specialists  
of Florida  
24 Del Prado Blvd.  
Cape Coral, FL 33909  
239-771-2171



**Rabia Khan, DO**  
Internal Medicine  
Lee Palliative Care  
8925 Colonial Center Dr., Ste. 1000  
Ft. Myers, FL 33905  
239-343-9560 fax: 239-343-9624  
www.leehealth.org



**Frederick Shannon, DO**  
Pediatric Orthopedics  
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Florida  
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General Surgery  
General Vein Surgery Institute  
15730 New Hampshire Ct.  
Ft. Myers, FL 33908  
239-481-0033 fax: 321-966-8322



**Dylan Murphy, DO**  
DPC  
SaniMed P.A.  
1699 Periwinkle Way  
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239-395-2434  
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**Brian Sipe, DO**  
Orthopedics  
LPG Orthopedics  
1682 NE Pine Island Rd.  
Cape Coral, FL 33909  
239-541-7553 fax: 239-343-4256  
www.leehealth.org



**Cathy Dahl, DO**  
Urogynecology  
Premier Women's Care of  
Southwest Florida  
9021 Park Royal Dr.  
Ft. Myers, FL 33908  
239-432-5858



**Ashley Pezzi, MD**  
Dermatology  
Millennium Physician Group  
13691 Metro Pkwy., Ste. 200  
Ft. Myers, FL 33912  
239-291-3604 fax: 239-291-3605



**Daniel Stanciu, MD**  
Internal Medicine  
Axel Health Primary Care  
4755 Summerlin Rd.  
Ft. Myers, FL 33919  
239-208-6648 fax: 239-208-6623  
www.axelhealth.org



**Michael Damit, MD**  
Bariatric Surgeon  
Surgical Healing Arts Center  
6150 Diamond Centre Ct.,  
Ste. 1300  
239-344-9786 fax: 239-344-9215  
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**John Razook**  
Diagnostic Radiology  
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3680 Broadway  
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239-936-2316 fax: 239-425-4798



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Florida Cancer Specialists  
8260 Gladiolus Dr.  
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**Victoria Yorke, MD**  
Family Medicine  
Lee Physician Group  
26800 S. Tamiami Trl., Ste. 340  
Bonita Springs, FL 34134  
239-495-4490 fax: 239-495-4491  
www.leehealth.org



**Tobin Hanson, DO**  
Orthopedics  
LPG Orthopedics  
1682 NE Pine Island Rd.  
Cape Coral, FL 33909  
239-541-7552 fax: 239-343-4256  
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**Claudia Rodriguez, MD**  
OB/GYN  
Fort Myers Gynecology  
12545 New Brittany Blvd.  
Ft. Myers, FL 33907



**Don't miss the January 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.** Renew online or request a copy of your statement from [admin@lcmsfl.org](mailto:admin@lcmsfl.org)

### LEE PHYSICIAN GROUP:

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Mark Fam



Joanna Greenhalgh



Tasnim Hussein



Snigdha Ila



Antony Mikhail

# PHYSICIAN WELL-BEING IS A PRIORITY

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Tracy Vo, DO

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as president of the Lee County Medical Society in its 95<sup>th</sup> year since being founded in 1927.



First, allow me to acknowledge all those who have contributed so much to my medical career and to my involvement with the Lee County Medical Society. It was Dr. Rick Palmon who encouraged me to get involved in the leadership of the Society. Thank you to Dr. Palmon and to the Board members for all their hard work and for staying involved with the Society. Lastly, I would like to thank my husband, Tom Lytton, and my family who has been instrumental in helping me adapt to my role with their encouragement and much needed support.

We have been through trying times in the past two years with COVID and recently with the devastation of Hurricane Ian.

**The physicians in our community have persevered and worked harder than ever to support our communities health needs. It is times like these that our fellow physicians and our patients need our support, talents and knowledge which adds pressure to an already demanding career.**

I would like to highlight again the needs within our profession particularly physician well-being. Now more than ever it is vital that we care for each other with stress management. The state of medicine continues to be more and more complex in addition to the recent damages and sadly lost lives that our communities have to endure due to the hurricane. We are all having to deal with the difficulties of maintaining a healthy work, life and family balance.

### 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTOR NOMINEES

President: **Dr. Ryan Lundquist**  
President Elect: **Dr. Scott Caesar**  
Treasurer: **Dr. Gamini Soori**  
Secretary: **Dr. Arie Dosoretz**

Board Members at Large: **Drs. Danielle Matta, Ramon Pabalan, Lucia Huffman, Liliana Bustamante, Magali Van Den Bergh and Justin Casey**

Past President: **Dr Tracy Vo**

The medical profession often attracts highly driven individuals with a strong sense of duty. Successfully completing the long and intense educational requirements often confers upon physicians a high degree of respect and responsibilities in our communities.

With these high levels of respect and responsibility, physicians are subject to high expectations from patients and the public. These expectations will demand prioritizing the care of others over care of self and can contribute to feelings of guilt and selfishness for managing our own well-being.

During this time of stress, it is critical that we find support and social connections. The Medical Society is an ally in support of all our colleagues for providing health care and information. Julie Ramirez, our Society's Executive Director, has been working hard to reach out to physicians who may need post hurricane assistance. She is also seeking grants that may be available from different organizations for physicians who may need them. Information of hurricane recovery may be obtained through the Society.

Physician colleagues are encouraged to take advantage of the Society's Physician Wellness Program. It provides a safe harbor for physicians seeking counseling in a confidential and professional environment. The Wellness Program is facilitated with two independent psychology groups. These groups provide therapy to active physician members of LCMS, up to three visits per calendar year.

The providers maintain a confidential file for each physician. No insurance will be billed and the LCMS will not be given any information about those who utilize the program. As such, this program is completely confidential.

Moving forward to next year, Dr. Ryan Lundquist of the Radiology Regional Center will resume the role of president for the Lee County Medical Society. With his leadership we will continue to work together to stay connected to our strong medical community.



# STRONGER TOGETHER: OUR COMMUNITY IN ACTION

THE RAMIREZ REPORT: Julie Ramirez, CAE, LCMS Executive Director



**T**hese past six weeks or so have been a challenge for our community for sure. Each one of us has our own stories of how we weathered Hurricane Ian and what effect it had on our lives. I was thankful to have limited damaged to my personal home so that I could focus fully on how to help our members.

Almost instantly after the storm, I discovered a key need to be the hub for information and resources.

Collaboration with other entities became vital to share resources and information. Working with the Southwest Florida Realtors Association we shared their combined listing of rentals available in our area to find homes for displaced physicians. Calling one rental agent looking for a home for a member, I was asked once, "Are you a REALTOR? NO, No I am not – I just trying to help." In collaboration with my local church, we were able to provide household goods and baby items to several of the young physician families who had experienced total loss.

The Society's motto has always been **Stronger Together**. I am proud that Lee County doctors are helping Lee County doctors: Dr. R helped Dr. M with a dining room set and chairs for their empty new rental, Dr. B sharing furniture with Dr. H. and Dr. Z and family helped Dr. M with garage cleanout from the flood waters. Many doctor families shared their homes with other doctor families. And it just hasn't been Lee County doctors helping Lee County. Several Medical Societies across the nation have reached out to help our Physician Wellness Program to reduce the mental trauma from the storm. Thank you to **Dade County Medical Association for donating \$10,000+**, the

**Florida Medical Association Alliance donated \$1,000, Hillsborough County Medical Association donated \$500.** Thank you to **Cheryl Malone, Executive Director of New York County Medical Society, Candice Barr, retired Executive Director of Lane County Medical Society in Eugene, Oregon, and Dr. Adriana Bonansea of Miami, FL for their donations. Thank you to Dr. C.S., Dr. Z, Dr. L., Dr. H., Dr. T.S.,** and others who have volunteered at the Sanibel Medical Clinic these past few weeks.

I am thankful to those who look to help physicians. Thank you to **FineMark National Bank and Trust for their generous donation of \$10,000** to the Physician Wellness Program. Thank you to **Henry Schein Cares** and the **Lee County Small Business Development Center** for reaching out to the Society with their grant opportunities.

If you noticed, I didn't spell out any physician's names. I learned through this process that most physicians, even if they need help and literally don't have a home anymore, want available help to go to someone else who might need it more. Some of our Society outreach efforts had to be done "Secret Santa" style – drop off and go. I am proud of our community and for physicians helping physicians. We are resilient and we are stronger together.

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## RETIRED MEMBER PUBLISHES ANOTHER NEW BOOK

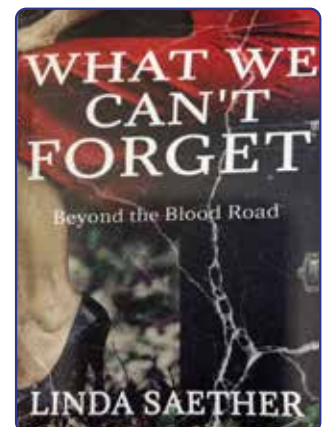
Novelist and LCMS retired physician member Dr. Linda Saether has released her latest novel, What We Can't Forget, a WWII historical story based on true family stories.

The book follows three young people through the horrors of WWII and into the aftermath where the world doesn't want to remember what they can't forget.

Brutally torn from his family and a life of privilege in Yugoslavia, Milo Ivanovic despairs when Nazis force him and his fellow captives to carve a route through treacherous terrain in the arctic north of Norway to deliver ore to the Wehrmacht.

No one survives the Blood Road, but he has to...

Pressured into a loveless marriage and brought to the United States, Adrijana Ivanovic, refuses to believe that her beloved twin is lost to her, until she realizes that Sigrid Holt, a perplexing Norwegian woman, holds the key to bringing back the brother she knew. The war ended, but it's never over... Purchase on [AMAZON](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1632864444).



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In partnership with the Marion County Medical Society, LCMS members can enjoy a **fully insured comprehensive employee benefits insurance program**.

The **Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement (MEWA)** has been adopted by twelve counties across the State of Florida and has consistently outperformed the standard market.

## Growth Trajectory for 2022

- 10% growth within the last plan year to 7,000+ members statewide
- Expanded to roughly 70% of all counties statewide
- Average annual premiums increased by less than 10%

Enclosed in the package are details on this valuable member benefit, along with the requirements for requesting a proposal. A few important items to note:

- ▶ The program renews March 1, 2023. New practices wishing to enter the plan will be effective on this date as well.
- ▶ If you are interested in seeing a proposal you will need to submit the required materials to HUB International no later than December 16, 2022.

▶ In addition to the 11 fully insured Florida Blue plans that are currently available, the Lee County Medical Society program also offers:

- Ancillary Insurance Marketplace – A complete menu of voluntary benefits designed especially for private medical practices with no minimum participation requirements!
- Enrollment Resources – Trained Benefit Advisors available to answer questions and assist with enrollment. Appointments are scheduled at a time that is most convenient for your employees to accommodate busy lifestyles!
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# PTSD AND HURRICANE IAN

by: Mollie Page, LCMS Marketing Coordinator

A study published in *Psychological Medicine* on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) determined that between 30 and 40 percent of hurricane and other natural disaster victims develop PTSD.

"Common PTSD symptoms include hypervigilance, flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance of reminders of the trauma, and cognitive distortions about the world and the future," said Stephanie Freitag, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist in New York in a *Healthline* interview.

In addition to exacerbating physical illnesses, PTSD can also affect how people function at work and at home. It also makes those with previous substance abuse disorders more vulnerable, and invites unhealthy coping behaviors. Unfortunately, PTSD from Hurricane Ian may not appear right away and may affect people for years.

## Hurricane Trauma Recovery

Changes in the community's mental health will evolve in the days, weeks and months following Hurricane Ian. In the days after it made landfall, calls to Collier County's branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) saw a sharp increase. Temporary pharmacy closures also deprived people of access to prescription antidepressants and antipsychotics. And according to a Medical Examiners Commission report, four men took their own lives after viewing their losses.

According to a study on suicide rates in areas that experienced a disaster between 2003 and 2015, **suicide rates jumped 26 percent within just the first year of recovery after hurricanes** before returning to the baseline in the second year.

Patients who experienced not only home loss from Hurricane Ian, but also the loss of everything in their homes are more likely to experience higher levels of depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

Further, symptoms of trauma can also affect people who did not experience loss. Escaping disaster when others you know did not may lead to survivor's guilt, which can be just as traumatic as losing all of your possessions and can make it difficult to ask for help.

Experiencing a hurricane or other violent storm is a stressful event. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) recommends keeping informed about new information and developments, but avoiding overexposure to news

rebroadcasts of the events and being sure that the outlets providing this information are credible.

For some, a good way to cope with trauma is to talk to friends, family or colleagues who are likely experiencing similar feelings. For pediatric patients, encourage their parents to ask them to talk about their fears and assure them the situation will improve. But if your feelings are affecting your ability to carry out your responsibilities, it's important to seek professional help. Whether it's trauma related to a hurricane or another experience, treatment can help you manage the PTSD.

Please take advantage of your LCMS Physician Wellness Program that provides FREE, confidential mental health counseling by licensed local professionals who understand PTSD.

### References:

- Lubman, Janet. (2018). Taking care of emotional health after a hurricane. Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America.
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- Pattemore, Chantelle. (2022) Hurricane Ian impact: The unexpected health effects. *Healthline*.

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# REDUCE CLINICIAN BURNOUT AND IMPROVE WELL-BEING WITH PEOPLE-FIRST LEADERSHIP

by: Robert D. Morton, MAS, CPPS, Assistant Vice President, Department of Patient Safety and Risk Management, The Doctors Company

Leaders in healthcare recognize that clinician burnout is not a new problem—and that it grew in severity during the crucible of the COVID-19 pandemic. But burnout in healthcare is too complex for a single leader or resource to solve. Driving burnout are work overload, loss of control, insufficient reward, erosion of community, absence of fairness, and misalignment of values.<sup>1</sup> Addressing these drivers in highly complex sociotechnical systems requires comprehensive organizational commitment, multiple strategies and tools, and support for high-functioning teams. Solving these issues also requires respectful, humble leaders who have the tenacity to change systems and can deliver the solutions that healthcare workers need to thrive.

These types of people-first leaders (some use the term “servant leaders”) put the needs of others first by sharing knowledge and power and by helping individuals perform to their highest capacity. People-first leaders whose actions have a positive impact on clinician burnout and well-being share common traits. Leaders recognize burnout as a problem unique to the workplace(s) in their charge that profoundly affects the multidimensional well-being of the people they lead and the patients they serve. They understand a hard truth about burnout, as described by experts Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter: “Burnout is shown to be a sign of a major dysfunction within an organization, and [it] says more about the workplace than it does about the employees.”<sup>2</sup> With this realization, people-first leaders react by saying, “This is unsustainable. We have to do something!”

## Commit

People-first leaders elevate their organizational commitment by making workforce well-being a measurable strategic imperative—prominently displayed on the organization’s performance dashboard—with dedicated resources, the same as other major strategic organizational priorities. Depending on the size of the organization, actions may include creating a chief wellness officer or champion position that has authority and resources.

## Measure Impact

People-first leaders assess their workplace with validated instruments that measure burnout, well-being, and the organizational costs of burnout in physicians, nurses,

and other clinicians. Evidence-based tools support accountability and help establish a baseline for tracking and reporting measurements over time as commitments are put into action.

## Build Leadership Skills

Skilled leaders committed to healthcare worker well-being are needed at all levels. People-first leaders acknowledge this and take steps to strengthen and develop their own and others’ leadership skills and behaviors and invest in building high-functioning teams—expert teams instead of teams of experts. One of these behaviors is to shadow clinicians at work, using “humble inquiry” to ask frontline staff questions to which the leader does not already know the answer.<sup>3</sup> Questions that will reveal opportunities to support include: “How has the pandemic affected your life? What do value and appreciation look and feel like at work? What gets in the way of doing a job you would feel proud of? What can be done to move forward and help you do a job you are proud of?”<sup>4</sup>

Answers to these questions from frontline staff point to the solutions that leaders with operational authority can deliver or enable staff to design and implement. People-first leaders deemphasize “doing more with less” in favor of change that is done with, not to people. Teamwork and inclusion are critical. Involving frontline workers in the improvement process empowers them to do the work well.

A positive rounding frame used by people-first leaders in “Positive Leadership WalkRounds” is “associated with better healthcare worker well-being and safety culture.”<sup>5</sup> Instead of asking, “What isn’t working?,” leaders ask “What are three things that are going well and one thing that could be better?”<sup>5</sup> They openly acknowledge the individuals and teams doing the good work and take respectful, supportive action to effect change. Effective people-first leaders also model pro-wellness behaviors for self-care<sup>6</sup> and cultivate these actions for their teams.

## Take a Hard Look

Next, people-first leaders examine their policies and practices with an eye toward eliminating the drivers of burnout that come from leadership mandates. These include nonevidence-based policies, metrics over mission,



dysfunctional EHR systems, unaddressed patient safety concerns, trivial administrative tasks, regulatory myths, staffing shortages, and lack of childcare or mental health support. Leaders gain knowledge by rounding during busy late shifts and observing firsthand the change opportunities that stare them in the face.<sup>7</sup>

## Fix Inefficiencies

While shadowing, rounding, and (most importantly) listening deeply, people-first leaders scan for opportunities to enhance workplace efficiency and facilitate improvements for streamlining functions. Implementing time-saving team-based documentation and care, Lean methods, EHR optimization, and staff training eliminates waste in workflows and allows clinicians to spend more time with patients.

## Cultivate a Culture of Well-being

Finally, people-first leaders work to cultivate and sustain a culture of respect, community, connection, and support. This starts with creating conditions that allow healthcare workers to feel safe and joyful at work and return home with enough time and energy reserve to enjoy their personal lives. It continues by building support and time for a culture that includes at-work buddy systems, meal sharing, and peer-to-peer and mental health programs. People-first leaders destigmatize and normalize asking for help.

The evidence-based actions discussed here have been field tested by healthcare leaders in the real world, organized into a framework of six essential elements based on expert guidance, and assembled into a compendium of resources for healthcare worker well-being by the National Academy of Medicine.<sup>8</sup> With the promulgation of these resources and others—like the 2022 Healthcare Workforce Rescue Package from ALL IN: WellBeing First for Healthcare—a movement is underway.<sup>9</sup>

While leaders may not be able to fix every problem, people-first leaders achieve quick wins on easier challenges and take collaborative action to build the capacity to address the bigger challenges. Taking people-first action is imperative. The well-being of our nation's healthcare depends on it.

### Resources:

**American Association for Physician Leadership, [Servant Leadership in the Medical Practice](#)**

### American Medical Association

- [Building Bridges Between Practicing Physicians and Administrators](#)
- [Burnout and Well-Being Toolkits](#)
- [Creating the Organizational Foundation for Joy in Medicine](#)

- [Cultivating Leadership](#)
- [Debunking Regulatory Myths](#)
- [Establishing a Chief Wellness Officer Position](#)
- [Organizational Cost of Physician Burnout](#)

Cassel CK. **The Doctor's Advocate.** [Clinician Burnout: From a Crisis to a Movement](#)

### Institute for Healthcare Improvement

- [Health Care Leaders: Heroism Is Out, Humility Is In](#)
- ["What Matters to You" Conversation Guide for Improving Joy in Work](#)

**Journal of Patient Safety, [Evaluating the Costs of Nurse Burnout—Attributed Turnover](#)**

**National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, [NIOSH Worker Well-Being Questionnaire](#)**

*Access hyperlinked items in the Resources by downloading the interactive issue of this Bulletin at [www.lcms.org/publications](http://www.lcms.org/publications).*

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The guidelines suggested here are not rules, do not constitute legal advice, and do not ensure a successful outcome. The ultimate decision regarding the appropriateness of any treatment must be made by each healthcare provider considering the circumstances of the individual situation and in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction in which the care is rendered.



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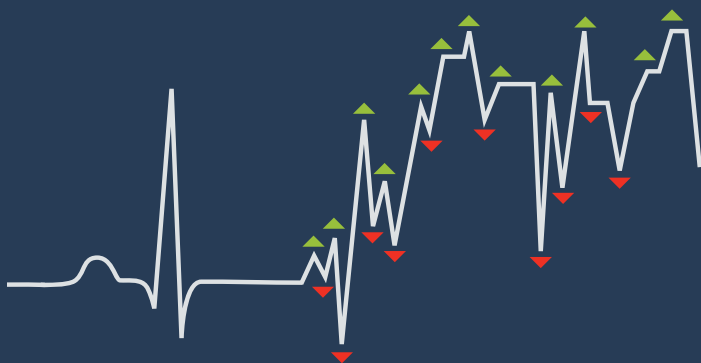
### PHYSICIAN WELLNESS PROGRAM

The **Physician Wellness Program (PWP)** provides a safe harbor for active LCMS physicians to address normal life difficulties in a confidential and professional environment. Our program works with two independent, local psychology groups that provide member-physicians with up to three visits per calendar year.

**This is a confidential and free member benefit. No insurance will be billed** and LCMS will not be given any personal information about those who use the program. LCMS pays a monthly bill based on the number of sessions provided. Full details on how to enroll or donate to this program can be found at [www.lcmsfl.org/our-programs](http://www.lcmsfl.org/our-programs).

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