

*“Johns Hopkins Medicine pushes the boundaries of discovery, transforms health care, advances medical education and creates hope for humanity. Together, we will deliver the promise of medicine.”*

Johns Hopkins Medicine (JHM) is an academic health center located in Baltimore, MD, that employs more than 40,000 full-time faculty and staff and has more than 900,000 annual outpatient visits. Like others across the country, JHM faces the pressures of learning to use electronic medical records (EMR) systems, reimbursement challenges and new reporting requirements. Recognizing the negative impact this ever-changing healthcare environment can have on its faculty and staff, JHM leadership has committed to intentionally cultivating joy so that clinicians and researchers are cared for and have the support they need to thrive.

JHM has identified concrete strategies to make practice environments more supportive, to nurture careers, to protect work-life integration and, most importantly, to help all members of the care team find fulfillment in their work. Several efforts described here have been underway for years under the auspices of the Office of Faculty, the Clinical Practice Association, Nursing Administration, Human Resources and other groups. To centralize and accelerate this work, JHM recently established a Joy in Medicine Task Force focused on identifying the main barriers to professional fulfillment and outlining strategies to preserve and enhance joy. The Task Force had broad representation from the organization’s six hospitals, physician practices and nursing community. The workgroups within the Task Force centered on support for academic and clinical success, EMR workflow, culture and work-life balance, regulatory training and clinical operations. Based on workgroup findings, action planning is underway to improve joy in medicine through efforts focused on the key areas of culture transformation, system coordination, professional development restructuring and workplace inefficiency reduction.

In our envisioned future, we will build on the successes of the past while intentionally cultivating environments in which faculty, staff, and learners have a defined sense of purpose and meaning in their work and in which they are challenged to grow and invest in their colleagues and patients. We are committed to establishing a Johns Hopkins work environment in which:

1. All faculty and staff feel that they are vital members of their Hopkins teams and are provided with adequate resources to do their jobs well. Employees work in professional and joyful environments populated with highly skilled, capable, efficient, and mutually-supportive team members. Employees typically report that their workload is manageable and that their salaries are fair and equitable.
2. The long-term professional and personal growth of employees is a core value. The work model includes strategic investment in human capital evidenced by work flow margins purposefully designed to support a professional life that is both challenging and rewarding.

It is hard to imagine a more critical issue for health care leaders than combatting burnout and attrition, because our people truly are our most precious asset—the heart and soul of our institutions. Moreover, study after study shows that happier care providers are better care providers, so this is not just a human resources issue. It’s about quality of care and doing what’s best for our patients.