

## Polk County Medical Society Commitment to the Well Being of Physicians

The Polk County Medical Society (PCMS) established in 1851 by Central Iowa physicians has always collectively supported and advocated for our physicians in 4 counties as the urban area of Iowa. We have worked collaboratively with area organization to address health care challenges facing our community, our physicians, and other medical clinicians. We believe that a Physician Wellness Program is possibly the most relevant and timely initiative that the PCMS is committed to. Offering members, a trusted resiliency program would give physicians, residents, and medical students access to private and confidential support, and hopefully reverse the trend of physician stress, burnout, and consideration of leaving their practice in Iowa.

The Mayo Clinic in our neighboring state has confirmed that satisfaction with work-life balance in US physicians has declined dramatically over the past 5 years. Many physicians in the US are experiencing increased stress, burnout, depression, emotional exhaustion, which is causing some to leave the profession, and sometimes, sadly to commit suicide. Residents and medical students have higher rates of burnout and depression than their peers who are pursuing nonmedical careers.

The PCMS is part of a medical society coalition that has developed a Wellness template, “Life Bridge (Physician Wellness Program) Tool Kit” which is a step by step guide to develop physician wellness programs. The Physician Foundation granted 9 county medical society executives 2-year funding to develop this tool kit and website. The tool kit has complete information on the foundation for a program, designing it with budget and legal considerations, how to promote it, measure any program, and sample resources. The template allows medical societies to establish their own program in their counties and states. We are working now on the final year of the grant collectively developing a website that will allow for all templates and information available for establishing a Physician Wellness Program in any state.

PCMS in Iowa is committed to create and sustain a confidential vibrant, healthy and functional wellness program that supports physicians, medical students, and residents who seek help with burnout, psychological distress, and personal wellness. The medical society is a trusted and neutral organization that will offer easily accessible coaching, counseling, burnout prevention retreats, website and print resources regardless of their corporate, independent or institutional affiliation. Our goal is to have a healthy medical community where every physician has a program they trust, to assist with burnout, frustrations, through advocacy, education, prevention, and referrals for care in an extremely confidential program. We believe that with this program doctors will be able to provide care and once again find the joy in medicine.