



Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Commitment Statement on Clinician and Staff Burnout

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) — the world’s oldest and largest private cancer center — has devoted more than 130 years to exceptional patient care, innovative research, and outstanding educational programs. Today, we are one of 50 National Cancer Institute–designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers, with state-of-the-art science flourishing side by side with clinical studies and treatment. The close collaboration between our physicians and scientists is one of our unique strengths, enabling us to provide patients with the best care available as we work to discover more-effective strategies to prevent, control, and ultimately cure cancer in the future. To continue to provide leadership through excellence, we must prioritize clinician well-being and recognize the negative impacts of burnout on patient care, physician health, and workforce/system costs.

We are a freestanding cancer center with over 18,000 employees, 1,200 faculty, 4,000 nurses, and 1,700 trainees, and many of the national trends regarding burnout apply to us and have an impact on the superb care we aim to deliver. We understand that in order to continue to provide excellent patient care, perform cutting edge research, and educate the next generation of leaders in oncology we need to focus on the well-being of our employees and specifically those who are on the front line of patient care. We recently took steps towards assessing and responding to this public health concern in our practice environment by calling for volunteers to identify concerns and priorities related to burnout. Through this effort, we enumerated several aspects that generate loss of control and clerical/electronic burdens.

Our upcoming efforts include:

1. Conducting a Hospital-wide Faculty Survey to assess level of burnout and validate themes
2. Developing a faculty committee with the ability to act on improvements needed, with representation from each relevant department
3. Collaborating with thought leaders in the field to learn more about their external work and findings

As an institution, we are committed to an ongoing approach to address issues affecting our clinicians, staff and trainees. Our goal is to not only address the ongoing stress of clinical care but also commit to measuring ongoing success or failure of interventions. We strive for an environment that not only values excellent clinical care, but also fosters the continued engagement, vigor and dedication of our faculty.