



CHANGE MAKER IN ACTION SERIES

**Lessons from the Field on How Well-Being
Leaders Get the Work Done**

Clinician well-being is increasingly recognized as a strategic priority for health care organizations, but many well-being leaders struggle to move from making the case for well-being to embedding it into the day-to-day systems of their organizations. Establishing well-being programs is only the first step, as creating meaningful and lasting improvements requires commitment and the integration of well-being into an organization's operations, decision-making, and culture. Without sustained action, organizations risk burnout, turnover, and missed opportunities to improve care delivery. Yet operationalizing well-being often requires navigating competing priorities, limited resources, complex organizational structures, and diverse stakeholder needs, each of which can present barriers to implementation. This resource guide highlights practical strategies and lessons from experienced well-being leaders to help organizations operationalize well-being initiatives across settings with varying levels of programmatic support and institutional buy-in.

Sign up to be a
Change Maker to prioritize
health worker well-being
at your organization:
nam.edu/ChangeMaker

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND STRATEGIES

Integrate Well-Being into Existing Organizational Priorities: Well-being becomes sustainable when it is positioned as a driver of organizational success rather than as an additional priority competing for attention.

- Make business and ethical cases for well-being by using stories alongside qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate how well-being contributes to organizational performance, while reinforcing that supporting the workforce is both an operational necessity and the right thing to do.
- Build well-being into organizational structures and decision-making by establishing shared governance, including well-being in strategic planning discussions, and making it a standing agenda item for leadership and operational teams.

From the Field: At The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, well-being leaders use executive leadership forums to connect well-being with institutional priorities such as patient access and workflow optimization, helping leaders recognize that operational improvements can also advance workforce well-being.

Start With What You Have and Demonstrate Value: Generating support for well-being initiatives can feel challenging when resources are limited, but meaningful progress can be made by focusing on your sphere of influence.

- Start small and demonstrate proof of concept by piloting achievable initiatives, measuring outcomes, and using early successes to build momentum, credibility, and support for future investments.
- Identify opportunities to advance well-being within your current role, relationships, and existing organizational structures instead of waiting for additional funding or staffing.

From the Field: At NYC Health + Hospitals, what began as a small peer support initiative led by a team of one has evolved into a system-wide well-being program with more than 45 full- and part-time wellness staff. The team demonstrated organizational value and built support for continued growth by tracking metrics such as awareness of programming, utilization of programming, and workforce outcomes (compassion fatigue, anxiety, sadness, and burnout) and reporting these alongside system-wide quality metrics.

Tailor Solutions While Maintaining a Shared Vision: Different teams, professions, and work settings face unique challenges and require different supports to achieve the same organizational vision for well-being.

- Customize initiatives to fit the workforce by tailoring interventions to the different risks, responsibilities, and stressors of different roles rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Maintain a shared vision of well-being within the organization while allowing local flexibility and empowering different departments and teams to implement strategies that best meet their needs.

From the Field: At UT MD Anderson, well-being leaders seek to understand the realities of frontline work by shadowing nurses, engineers, physicians, food service staff, and others throughout the organization. These firsthand insights help them understand the operational pressures employees face and tailor well-being initiatives to the needs of different roles.

Develop Shared Responsibility for Well-Being: Well-being teams can range from one dedicated leader to more than 45 full- and part-time well-being staff, demonstrating that teams of any size can build successful well-being efforts by



Well-being work is incredibly hard. If you feel that you're being challenged, it is because it is challenging, and not because you are failing."

JENNIFER BICKEL



The influence you have may be more valuable than the budget line that you've received."

JONATHAN RIPP



It's not just what operations, IT, and communications can do for physician and employee wellness; it's also exploring how all of our wellness programs can best support their workflows and priorities."

RUBEN SANCHEZ



The definition of wellness has to come from not only the individual, but the system itself, and that shared definition has to be made not by the C-Suite, but the we-suite. Wellness starts with we."

JEREMY SEGALL

generating buy-in and shared ownership across the organization.

- Start by building a network of champions and partners by engaging leaders and staff at every level of the organization and cultivating relationships across departments to advance shared goals.
- Build wellness literacy and shared ownership throughout the workforce by helping people understand how they can contribute to organizational well-being and communicating a clear vision that resonates with different stakeholder groups.

From the Field: At Southern California Permanente Medical Group, more than 100 physician leaders, administrative leaders, and project managers advance well-being efforts alongside their primary responsibilities, demonstrating how distributed leadership can extend the reach of a small central well-being team.

HOW WELL-BEING LEADERS GET THE WORK DONE

The role of a well-being leader looks different in every organization. Responsibilities vary based on an organization's priorities, available resources, workforce needs, and the maturity of its well-being efforts. However, while specific duties differ, well-being leaders often share a common set of functions. The graphic below highlights the core areas of work commonly led or influenced by well-being leaders.

HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCES FOR WELL-BEING LEADERS

- The American Medical Association's Ed Hub offers newcomer-friendly toolkits such as [Establishing a Chief Wellness Officer Position: Create the Organizational Groundwork for Professional Well-Being](#) and [Chief Wellness Officer Road Map: Implement a Leadership Strategy for Professional Well-Being](#).
- The [CHARM Society](#) facilitates regular community-building and structured conversations among well-being champions, in addition to certificate courses and interest groups.
- [Executive Leadership and Physician Well-Being: Nine Organizational Strategies to Promote Engagement and Reduce Burnout](#) is a framework that outlines evidence-based strategies health care leaders can use to reduce burnout and promote engagement.

Strategic Leadership

- Align well-being with organizational priorities, strategic goals, and leadership agendas
- Represent and champion well-being in executive, operational, and governance settings
- Translate the value of well-being into language that resonates with organizational leaders and decision-makers

Measurement & Evaluation

- Identify and implement metrics to assess workforce well-being and organizational progress
- Demonstrate and communicate impact of well-being initiatives through both quantitative and qualitative data
- Build evidence for well-being interventions and use findings to guide continuous improvement
- Provide guidance with regards to appropriate actions to take based on identified drivers of well-being outcomes on the local level

Operational Improvement

- Use well-being data and feedback from frontline teams to identify drivers of fulfillment and burnout and guide improvement efforts that address workflow and operational pressures
- Integrate well-being considerations into quality, safety, access, and operational excellence initiatives

Culture & Workforce Support

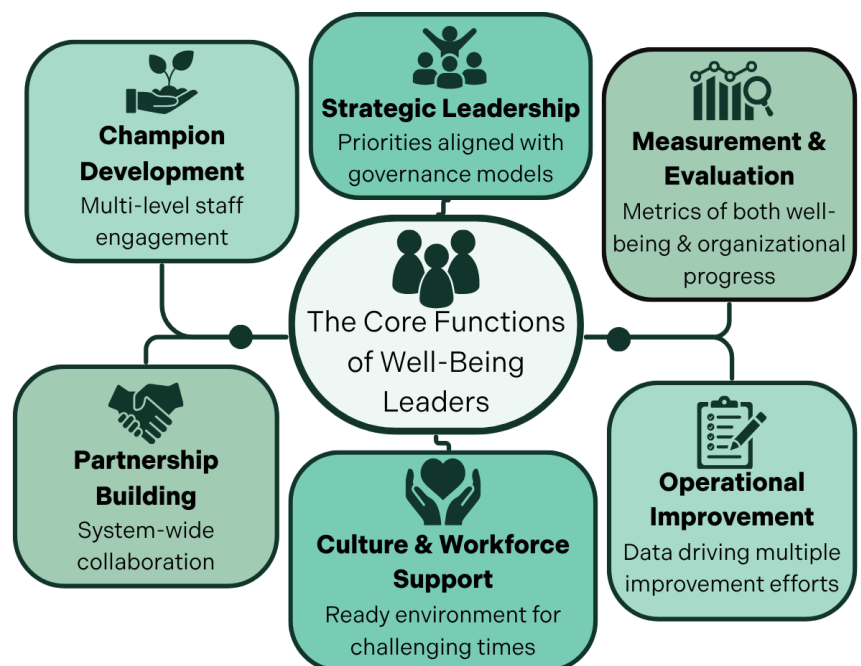
- Foster environments where health workers in distress can seek support without stigma
- Promote psychological safety and shared responsibility for well-being
- Coordinate resources and programs that help individuals cope with stress, adversity, and the challenges of working in health care

Partnership Building

- Engage leaders and teams across operations, quality, HR, communications, IT, and other functions to advance well-being
- Build shared ownership for well-being across the organization
- Identify areas of overlap where well-being efforts can support the goals and priorities of other departments

Champion Development

- Build well-being literacy and capacity among staff at all levels of the organization
- Develop local leaders who advance well-being within their own teams, departments, and settings
- Create structures that empower employees to identify challenges and contribute to solutions



Disclaimer: The external resources on this page do not necessarily represent the views of any one organization, the Clinician Well-Being Collaborative, or the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and have not been subjected to the review procedures of, nor are they a product of, the National Academies. We are sharing this curated list based on the expert guidance of Collaborative members to serve as resources.

ABOUT THE CHANGE MAKER IN ACTION SERIES



The National Academy of Medicine's (NAM) Change Maker in Action Series is designed to foster dynamic information-sharing and collaboration, highlight the impact of ongoing initiatives, and elevate effective solutions to shared challenges. Each webinar focuses on a specific topic relevant to the NAM Change Maker community, promoting ongoing efforts to embed well-being as a long-term value. Through this series, the NAM aims to inspire continued progress and drive the national movement to support the well-being of the health workforce.

Learn more at nam.edu/ChangeMaker.

WEBINAR SPEAKERS:



MODERATOR:

Jonathan Ripp, MD, MPH

Professor of Medicine,
Medical Education, Geriatrics,
and Palliative Medicine;
Dean for Well-Being &
Chief Wellness Officer



Jennifer Bickel, MD

Vice President & Chief
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Ruben Sanchez, MD

Chief Wellness Officer &
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Jeremy Segall, MA, RDT, LCAT, FPCC

System Chief Wellness Officer
& Assistant Vice President,
Human Experience

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

The Office for Professional Engagement and Development's Well-Being and Work Experience Core seeks to promote the well-being and professional satisfaction of all faculty, trainees, and staff by advancing a culture that empowers them to do their best work within a community where they are valued.

UT MD Anderson

At UT MD Anderson, wellness is operationalized through its Wellness and Mental Health Institute. Four pillars serve as the foundation: 1) Evidence-based, evidence producing; 2) Wellness is brain health; 3) Humans caring for humans; 4) Culture and operations. Wellness leaders work collaboratively across the institution to integrate wellness into academic, operational, and financial programs, championing strategies that support the well-being of employees.

Southern California Permanente Medical Group

The work of SCPMG's Physician Wellness and Peer Support teams are to acknowledge, embrace, understand, and act to engage the organization to operationalize evidence-based strategies to optimize systems and mitigate work-related drivers of burnout and, by advocating for the physician experience, enable physicians to enhance the patient experience.

NYC Health + Hospitals

Helping Healers Heal or H3, is the foundational infrastructure for enhanced Wellness programming across all service lines of NYC Health + Hospitals to address emotional and psychological needs of all staff. The Wellness program focuses on the following 8 Dimensions of Wellness: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual.