

Three quarters of Americans concerned about burnout among healthcare professionals

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Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Americans are concerned about burnout among healthcare professionals, according to new survey data released today by ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists). The results follow a 2018 study in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy (AJHP)* that found 53 percent of pharmacists self-reported a high degree of burnout caused by increasing stresses and demands.

"Pharmacists, as patient care providers and members of the [healthcare](#) team, strive to provide the best quality of care to their patients. But with chronic job stressors many clinicians are experiencing symptoms of [burnout](#)," said ASHP CEO Paul W. Abramowitz, Pharm.D.,Sc.D. (Hon.), FASHP. "We believe that fostering and sustaining the well-being and resiliency of the pharmacy workforce is in the best interest of patients and the [healthcare system](#) as a whole. ASHP has had a longstanding commitment to working with our members and their patients and colleagues to raise awareness and advance solutions to help prevent burnout in healthcare."

The survey, conducted online in May 2019 by The Harris Poll on behalf of ASHP, drew on the opinions of more than 2,000 U.S. adults ages 18 and up and demonstrated a high degree of public awareness that burnout among pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and other professionals can lead to impaired attention and decreased functioning that threatens to cause medical errors and reduce safety. Another recent study conducted by the

Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., found that burnout costs the U.S. healthcare system an estimated \$4.6 billion a year.

One in four Americans in the new survey said they believe hospital pharmacists (26%) and retail pharmacists (25%) are often burnt out. The National Academy of Medicine's definition of [clinician](#) burnout includes clinicians feeling emotionally exhausted, unsatisfied and detached from one's work, and a low sense of personal accomplishment. According to the study in AJHP, pharmacists list increased workloads, periodic drug shortages, and heavy demands from electronic health records, insurance, and regulatory requirements as drivers of burnout.

A majority of Americans encourage [healthcare professionals](#) to take care of themselves. In The Harris Poll, 9 out of 10 (91%) said it is important that their doctor, [pharmacist](#), nurse, or other healthcare professional do whatever they can to avoid burnout; and 77 percent said that when they see their clinician is feeling burnt out, they become concerned about their own care and safety.

The survey showed high levels of awareness of burnout, nearly half of U.S. adults (47%) said they would avoid asking questions if they thought their healthcare professional appeared burnt out because they would not want to add to their stress. The survey also suggests that healthcare professionals may be conveying signs of burnout without knowing it. U.S. adults said they can tell when healthcare providers feel burnt out if they seem tired (60%) or rushed (56%).

"A healthy and thriving clinician workforce is essential to ensure optimal patient health outcomes and safety," said Abramowitz. "Within the healthcare industry, we are working to help build a culture of resilience and well-being to ensure that no patient or clinician is harmed due to burnout; but it takes a concerted effort from all entities involved—providers and healthcare organizations."

ASHP has, for nearly 40 years, provided resources, tools, and community connections to help its members develop solutions to combat burnout in the workplace. The organization's 2018 professional policy emphasizes the shared responsibility among members of the healthcare team and between individuals and organizations to take action to boost resilience. ASHP is a sponsoring member of the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience, which seeks to understand the underlying causes of clinician stress, burnout and suicide, and to advance evidence-based solutions.

ASHP recently launched an online portal—Wellbeing & You—which serves as both a resource center and a place for pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians to share their experiences with burnout and take a pledge to show their personal commitment to strengthening resilience.

To build a resilient workforce, ASHP recommends that clinicians monitor their stress levels, find a mentor, develop meaningful social connections, embrace change, and start a daily gratitude practice.

ASHP encourages healthcare organizations to boost resilience by:

- Recognizing the presence and risk of burnout in the workplace
- Identifying burnout risk factors
- Forming a committee to explore burnout causes and resilience solutions
- Evaluating changes to confirm an increase in employee resilience
- Celebrating and sharing positive improvements

Provided by American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

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