



BRIDGING THE BURNOUT GAP

Recognizing and addressing gender-based differences in physician burnout

The buzzword “burnout” is omnipresent in today’s medical profession. The [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#) defines burnout as “a long-term reaction marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of sense of personal accomplishment.” Burnout has long been a critical factor driving physicians, nurses, and other healthcare workers away from the medical field. The stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated it over the past two years.

Factors that contribute to burnout include:

- Specialty type
- Work hours
- Lack of autonomy or control over work
- Career stage
- Loss of meaning and joy in work
- Perceived lack of fairness in promotion or compensation
- Having children/family members to care for at home
- Financial stress
- Sexual harassment
- Gender bias/discrimination



Source: [National Academy of Medicine](#)

All medical professionals are susceptible to burnout, but scholars are learning that female health care workers experience and exhibit symptoms of burnout differently from their male counterparts. Read on to learn more about these differences and how experts think the medical field can address them.

The Great Gender Burnout Divide



The number of female vs. male physicians who self-reported burnout in a 2017 survey of 15,000 physicians across the country.

Source: [Medscape National Physician Burnout and Depression Report 2018](#)



Emotional Exhaustion

Female physicians tend to exhibit symptoms of emotional exhaustion when experiencing burnout.

VS

Depersonalization in Burnout

Male physicians more often experience depersonalization — a disconnection from their thoughts and feelings.

“It may be the case that gender-based differences in the expression of burnout — such as emotional exhaustion — make it easier to identify among women.”

Source: [Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley](#).



of women working in academic medicine reported experiencing **gender discrimination** in a 2014 survey.

Source: [Journal of the American Medical Association](#)

In a 2017 study at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, **women physicians reported significantly lower rates of professional fulfillment 35.1%** than their **male peers 50.4%**

Source: [Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety](#)



of female physicians in a 2016 survey said they experienced discrimination related to being a mother. **90% of respondents said this discrimination was related to pregnancy or maternity leave.**

Source: [JAMA Internal Medicine](#)



In a 2019 survey of more than 1,300 internists and internal medicine trainees, female physicians had:

- **61%** lower odds of having a “joyous workplace.”
- **39%** lower odds of having a supportive working environment.
- **61%** lower odds of having a manageable workload.

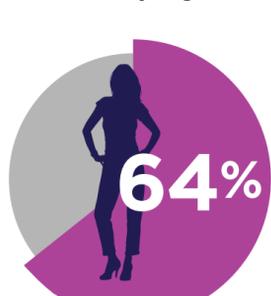
Source: [JAMA Network Open](#)

Addressing Female Physician Burnout Is a ChenMed Priority

“Women are transforming the medical profession,” states [Timothy Hoff, professor of management, health systems, and health policy at Northeastern University](#). The numbers back him up: [women currently account for more than half of the students](#) in American medical schools today.

Retaining women physicians and medical professionals is vital to ensuring the strength of our health care system. But to do so, Hoff says, “we need workplace interventions that serve them better.”

Those interventions include things like eliminating gender-based harassment and bias, flexibility to facilitate caregiving, and—perhaps most importantly—pathways to higher pay and leadership positions. [ChenMed is a national leader in this area](#), rewarding outstanding female doctors with partnership promotions at levels dramatically higher than health care industry averages.



of ChenMed clinician partners are women

Nationally, according to the [Association of American Medical Colleges](#), just **41.3%** of family medicine/general practice physicians and **38.7%** of internal medicine physicians have ownership in their practices.

“We remain committed to serving our highly diverse staff at every level of our hyper-growth company,” explains Stephanie Chen, chief legal and culture officer at ChenMed. “Our amazing staff plus shared values of love, accountability, and passion are just a few reasons why we frequently are being recognized as a great place to work.”

For more information about ways to address physician burnout, download our e-book, [Value-Based Health Care: Rx for Physician Burnout](#)



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