Physician health

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Policy document

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REPLACES
PD98-04 Physician health and well-being

TOPICS
Health human resources
Ethics and medical professionalism

Documents

PHYSICIAN HEALTH

BACKGROUND TO CMA POLICY

The health of physicians is an area of increasing concern due to the significant impact on patient care and the health system. Physician burnout, mental health issues, and addiction are becoming more prevalent, leading to increased absenteeism and disengagement. This situation is particularly concerning in light of the ongoing pandemic and the increased workload.

1. THE EPISTLOGIC OF PHYSICIAN WELLNESS

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In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of physician wellness in various settings, including education, research, and clinical practice. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has been at the forefront of advocating for policies and initiatives that support the well-being of physicians. In response to the challenges facing the profession, the CMA initiated the Physicians’ Health Program (PHP) in 1998. This program provides support and resources to physicians who are experiencing workplace or personal challenges, including those related to burnout, mental health issues, and substance use.

The PHP is a confidential and voluntary program designed to help physicians who are experiencing difficulties. It offers a range of services, including counseling, support groups, and resources to help physicians manage stress and improve their overall well-being. The program aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for physicians to address their health concerns and seek the guidance they need to recover.

The CMA recognizes that addressing physician wellness is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. In addition to the PHP, the CMA has been working with other stakeholders to develop policies and strategies to support physician well-being. This includes advocating for changes in the work environment, promoting public awareness of the issue, and encouraging ongoing research and education on the topic.

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GLIDING PRINCIPLES

A greater understanding of physician health

It is vitally important that we understand the factors that lead to physician burnout and compassion fatigue. Programs and policies aimed at improving physician health must be evidence-based and focused on creating a culture that supports mental health and well-being.

Physician health as a quality indicator

Physician health is a key indicator of patient care quality. Programs and policies that support physician health can lead to improved patient outcomes and increased job satisfaction.

Physician health as a shared responsibility

Physician health is a shared responsibility among physicians, the medical education system, and society. It is important to develop a culture that values and supports the well-being of physicians.