Physician health
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Policy document

2017-10-21

PD98-04 Physician health and well-being

Health human resources
Ethics and medical professionalism

Background to CMA Policy

PHYSICIAN HEALTH

In recent decades there has been growing recognition of the important role played by licensed physicians and the medical profession as a whole in the public health of the communities in which they practice. The majority of the world's population has access to physicians whose work provides a strong foundation for improving the health of individuals and populations. However, physician health is an important issue that needs to be addressed in order to support and sustain high-quality health care delivery. This policy statement aims to provide guidance on issues related to physician health and well-being.

1. The Importance of Physician Health

Physicians play a critical role in the delivery of high-quality health care. Their well-being is a vital aspect of maintaining an effective and sustainable health care system. Physicians need to be capable of providing quality care to their patients, and maintaining their own health is essential to their ability to do so. This policy statement highlights the importance of physician health and outlines strategies for promoting and sustaining well-being.

2. Physician Well-being

In order to maintain their health and well-being, physicians need to prioritize self-care and develop effective strategies for managing stress and maintaining balance. This includes regular exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, and seeking support when needed. In addition, physicians should be encouraged to communicate their needs and concerns with colleagues and other healthcare professionals.

3. Access to Healthcare Services

Physicians need to have access to high-quality healthcare services, including mental health services, to support their own well-being. This includes access to timely and effective treatment for any health issues they may experience. In order to address these needs, healthcare systems should be designed to support the mental and physical health of all healthcare professionals.

CMA Policybase - Canadian Medical Association
CMA STATEMENT ON PHYSICIAN HEALTH AND WELLNESS
Guiding Principles and Commitments for a Shared Responsibility

What it is
The health and well-being of physicians and other health care providers are critical to maintaining and improving patient health. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) recognizes the importance of physician health and wellness and encourages all physicians to take responsibility for their own health.

Why it matters
Physician burnout is a complex issue that affects patients, health systems, and society at large. Maintenance of health care quality and provision requires a healthy provider workforce. When physicians are healthy, they are more likely to provide high-quality care, which benefits patients and the health system as a whole. Conversely, when physicians are unwell, patient care may suffer, leading to increased costs and decreased outcomes for patients.

Guiding principles

1. Greater understanding of physician health
   A greater understanding of physician health is needed. Physicians are human beings who are affected by personal and professional pressures. Understanding the factors that contribute to physician health and wellness is essential. This includes recognizing the importance of work-life balance, self-care, and support systems.

2. Physician health as a quality indicator
   Physician health is an indicator of quality care. When physicians are healthy, they are more likely to provide high-quality care, which benefits patients and the health system. Conversely, when physicians are unwell, patient care may suffer, leading to increased costs and decreased outcomes for patients.

3. Physician health as a shared responsibility
   Physician health is a shared responsibility. It is essential for physicians, health care institutions, and society to work together to promote physician health and wellness. This includes providing adequate resources, support systems, and opportunities for ongoing professional development.

By taking a proactive approach to physician health and wellness, physicians can contribute to the overall health of patients and the health system as a whole.