



**THE
PHYSICIANS
FOUNDATION**

Empowering Physicians
Improving Healthcare

2021 SURVEY OF

AMERICA'S PHYSICIANS

COVID-19 Impact Edition:

A Year Later

**A Survey Examining How the
Coronavirus Pandemic Affected the
Nation's Physicians**

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2021 SURVEY OF AMERICA’S PHYSICIANS

COVID-19 IMPACT EDITION: A YEAR LATER

A Survey Examining How the Coronavirus Pandemic Affected the Nation’s Physicians

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INTRODUCTION: THE ONGOING TOLL

More than a year since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, physicians are continuing to experience new sources of stress that are taking an elongated toll on their wellbeing and the wellbeing of those in their immediate environments.

The Physicians Foundation's *2021 Survey of America's Physicians* sought to understand the breadth of COVID-19's impact on physicians and their patients, colleagues and practices.

Last year, The Physicians Foundation redirected the focus of its biennial national physician survey exclusively to the pandemic and its impact on physicians. The 2021 survey expands on these findings to uncover how COVID-19 continues to have a lasting impact on physicians, practices and patient experiences. Trends and topics typically addressed by the biennial survey to provide a "state of the union" of the medical profession, including physician work hours, use of electronic health records (EHR), valued-based compensation and others, are not addressed in this special edition. The Physicians Foundation will continue to examine these and related issues in future surveys and research.

A YEAR IN REVIEW: A COMPARISON SURVEY

As physicians continue to deal with the ongoing pandemic, despite the introduction of multiple vaccines and treatment options, they routinely have even less time to devote to completing surveys.

Therefore, to assess how physician wellbeing has changed over the course of the last year, The Physicians Foundation determined to conduct the 2021 survey utilizing previously examined question themes. These questions, while updated to reflect how feedback has changed in recent months, provide a comparison viewpoint so we might further understand the true impact of COVID-19 on the health system overall a year after the pandemic began.

This survey was conducted exclusively online among U.S. physicians and was designed to last no more than 10 minutes.

We believe the survey will be of interest to health care professionals, policy makers, academics, media members and anyone concerned by how the current pandemic is continuing to affect today's physicians. We encourage all of those who have a stake in the medical profession and in health care delivery to reference this updated survey and comment on its findings.

Gary Price, M.D.
President

Robert Seligson
Chief Executive Officer

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Chairman, Research Committee

KEY FINDINGS:

The Physicians Foundation's *2021 Survey of America's Physicians* focuses on how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted physician wellbeing and degrees of change over a year into the pandemic, as well as their patients, colleagues and practices. The survey was conducted from May 26 to June 9, 2021, and the data presented is based on 2,504 responses. Complete methodology is available on page 18.

Key findings of the survey include:



8 in 10 physicians were impacted as a result of COVID-19.

- 49% reported a reduction in income
- 32% experienced a reduction in staff
- 18% switched to a primary telemedicine practice

As COVID-19 has lasting effects on health care in the community, most physicians anticipate:

- Continuing telehealth in their practice
- Seeing an increase in more serious health conditions
- A significant decline in independent practices

Sixty-one percent of physicians report often experiencing feelings of burnout, showing a significant increase since 2018 as tracked by The Physicians Foundation data.

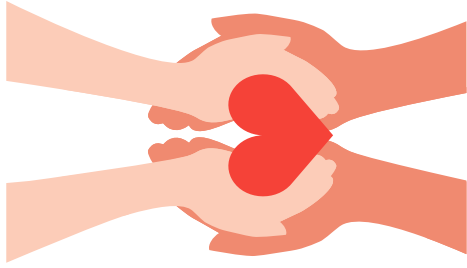


- Although, nearly 46% would still recommend medicine as a career option to young people

When it comes to COVID-19 impacts on physician mental health:



- **More than half of physicians (57%) have felt inappropriate feelings of anger, tearfulness or anxiety because of COVID-19**, 46% of physicians have withdrawn or isolated themselves from others and 34% felt hopeless or without a purpose
- Despite the high incidence of mental health symptoms, only **14% of physicians sought medical attention**



The majority of physicians identify their family (89%), friends (82%) and colleagues (71%) as most helpful to their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.

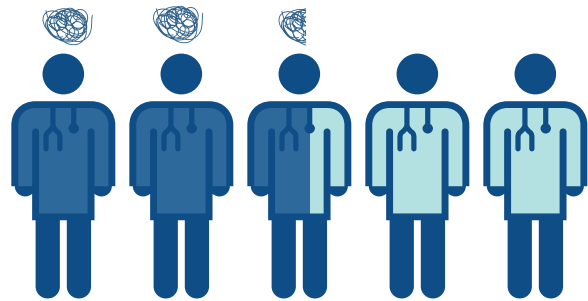
- Medical practices/groups (53%) and hospitals/health systems (35%) round out the top 5 of the most helpful external factors to mental health and wellbeing



Over 70% of physicians believe a multi-pronged approach needs to be taken to address mental health conditions, burnout and/or preventing suicide, such as:

- Confidential therapy, counseling or support phone lines
- Evidence-based professional training to prevent burnout, behavioral health conditions and suicide

- Peer-to-peer support groups
- Evidence-based education campaign to address stigma with seeking mental/behavioral health support



More than half (55%) of physicians know of a physician who has either considered, attempted or died by suicide in their career. Twenty percent know of a physician who has either considered, attempted or died by suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic:

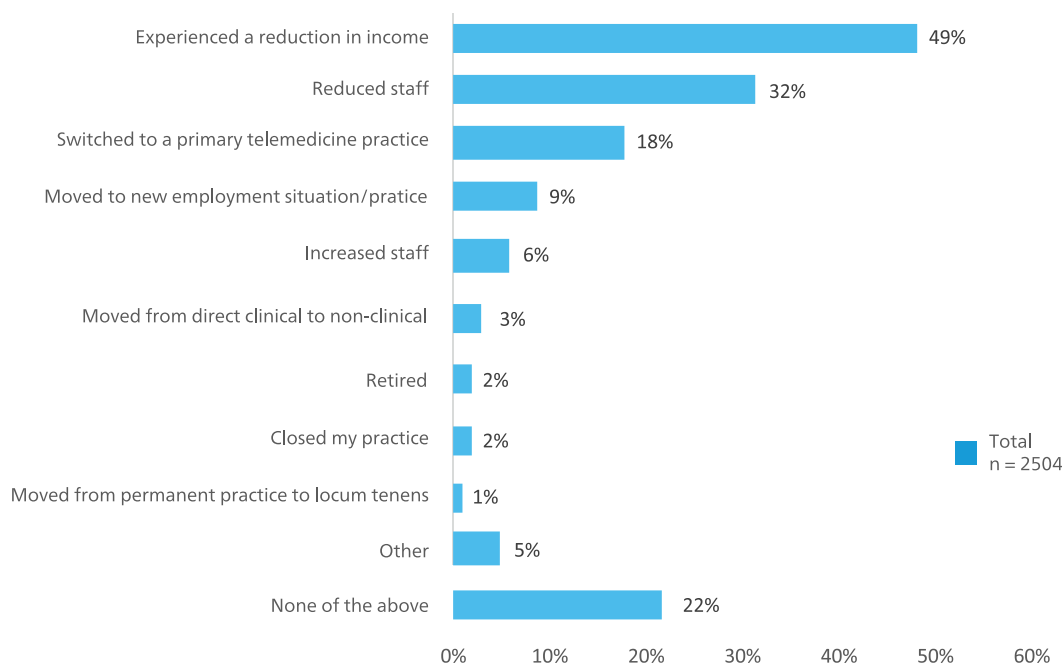
- 14% of physicians know of a physician who considered suicide
- 4% of physicians know of a physician who attempted suicide
- 7% of physicians know of a physician who died by suicide

QUESTIONS ASKED AND RESPONSES RECEIVED

The Physicians Foundation's 2021 Survey of America's Physicians focuses on how the coronavirus has impacted physicians' practices and wellbeing.

Detailed questions asked and responses received include the following:

Q1: Have you done or experienced any of the following as a result of COVID-19?



Close to half of physicians (49%) surveyed indicated a reduction in income as the number one experience over the previous year dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This is compared to 32% who indicated they experienced a reduction in staff and 18% who specifically switched to a telemedicine practice due to COVID-19.

However, 68% of those who identified as independent physicians indicated a more drastic reduction in income or staff than physicians who were employed by a hospital or health system.

Independent physicians were overall more likely to have been impacted by COVID-19 than employed physicians. Despite the reduction in income or staff for independent physicians, only 9% of physicians overall indicated they moved to a new employment situation or practice, while even fewer (2%) noted they had closed their practice.

A significantly larger proportion of those who identified as 46+ years old and male experienced a reduction in income due to COVID-19:

Experienced a Reduction in Income as a Result of COVID-19

	2021
Employed Physicians	44%
Independent Physicians	68%
Male Physicians	50%
Female Physicians	46%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	41%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	56%

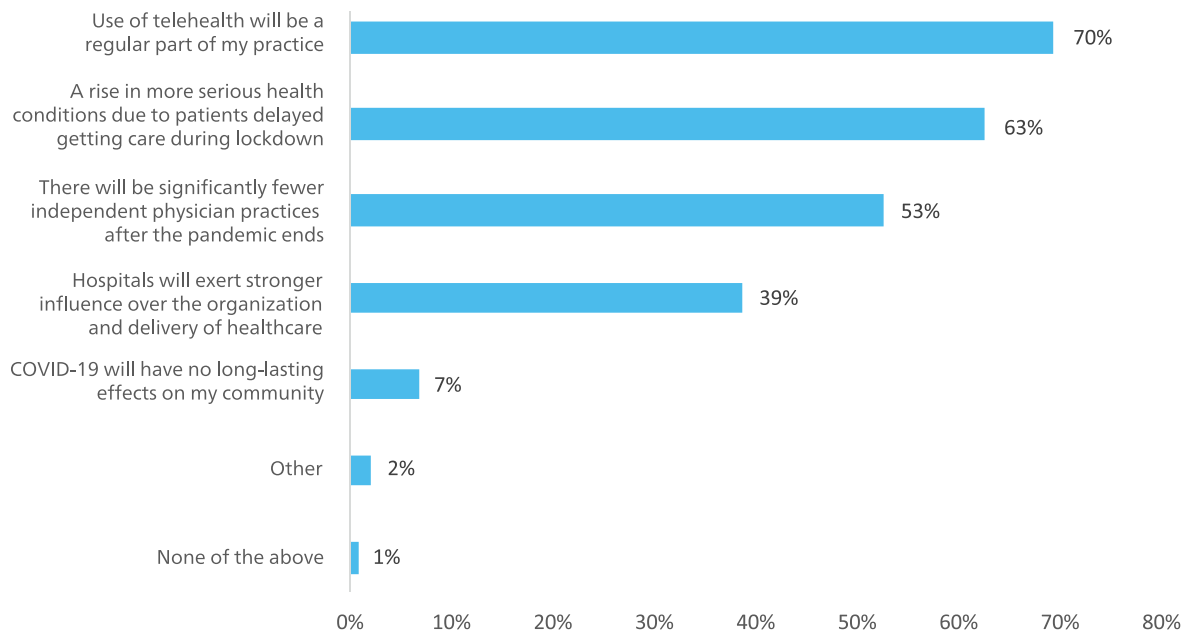
Primary care and employed physicians reported they were more likely to switch to telemedicine or change practices due to COVID-19. Female and younger physicians reported they were more likely to have

switched to a primary telemedicine practice than their male counterparts:

Switched to a Primary Telemedicine Practice

	2021
Employed Physicians	20%
Independent Physicians	14%
Primary Care Physicians	22%
Specialist Physicians	16%
Male Physicians	17%
Female Physicians	20%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	21%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	16%

Q2: In what ways will COVID-19 have long lasting effects on how health care is organized and delivered in your community?



Though 22% of respondents indicated they were not impacted by the pandemic in any significant manner, the survey nevertheless suggests that the pandemic has been detrimental to how physicians deliver health care to patients and has led to significant changes in their practice environments, income stability and manner of providing care to patients.

As we continue into the second year of the pandemic, physicians were asked to identify the long-lasting impacts of COVID-19 on their practices and how health care is experienced by physicians and patients alike. A majority (70%) of physicians indicated they anticipate continuing the use of telehealth in their practice, with a significantly larger proportion of employed and primary care physicians expecting telehealth to continue in their practice versus their independent and specialist counterparts:

Use of Telehealth as a Regular Part of Practice

	2021
Independent Physicians	61%
Employed Physicians	74%
Primary Physicians	77%
Specialist Physicians	67%



Seventy-seven percent of primary care physicians responded that they expect to continue using telehealth, falling in line with developing trends identifying that 95% of health centers reported using telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic as reported on by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, female physicians indicated they are more likely than male physicians to expect to continue telehealth with their patients moving forward:

Use of Telehealth as Regular Part of Practice

	2021
Male Physicians	68%
Female Physicians	74%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	75%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	66%

Seventy-five percent of physicians who are 45 years of age or under indicated they overwhelmingly expect to continue using telehealth in their practices as compared to only 66% of physicians 46 years of age and over. Despite the resumption of in-person health care options for many patients, telehealth appears to remain a crucial option for both physicians and patients.

The Physicians Foundation's *2020 Survey of America's Physicians: COVID-19 and the Future of the Health Care System* found that 67% of physicians indicated that 11% or more of their patients typically delayed or declined treatment due to costs, leading to an increased risk of developing a chronic condition and resulting in a higher cost of care. In a similar manner, the *2021 Survey of America's Physicians* indicated that the majority (63%) of physicians expect to see an increase in

more serious health conditions. Female physicians reported they anticipate the rise due to patients delaying care during the COVID-19 lockdown. They reported this expectation at a higher rate than male physicians. Primary care physicians also indicated they anticipate a rise in more serious health conditions at a higher rate than specialists.

Expect Rise in More Serious Health Conditions Due to Lockdowns Resulting in Delay of Care

	2021
Primary Care Physicians	66%
Specialist Physicians	61%
Male Physicians	60%
Female Physicians	68%

Additionally, 53% of survey respondents believe there will be significantly fewer independent physician practices after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, while only 39% anticipate hospitals exerting a stronger influence over their organization overall. Male physicians and younger

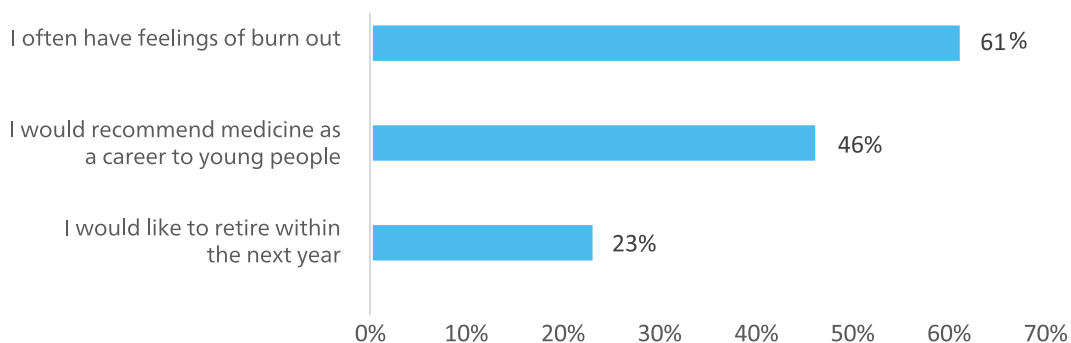
physicians reported a significantly higher rate of believing there will be increases in hospital influence over the organization and delivery of healthcare as compared to female and older physicians over the age of 46.

Hospital Influence on the Organization and Delivery of Health Care

	2021
Male Physicians	43%
Female Physicians	32%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	41%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	37%

Only 7% of physicians across survey demographic groups reported a belief that COVID-19 will have no long-lasting effects on their communities, indicating that a vast majority of physicians are anticipating drastic changes to the medical practice in the future.

Q3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



In The Physicians Foundation's 2021 Survey of America's Physicians, survey responses identified that 61% of physicians overall report often experiencing feelings of burnout as compared to only 40% of physicians reporting this in 2018. Additionally, 69% of female physicians indicated they often experience feelings of burnout, compared to only 57% of male physicians.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been several observations around the increased workload for female and young primary care and employed physicians, creating an environment ripe for faster burnout rates. A significantly larger proportion of primary care and employed physicians across all surveyed demographic groups reported frequently feeling burnout that might have had an impact on their wellbeing.



A significantly larger proportion of younger physicians and female physicians report frequently feeling burnout. This may be due in part to the dual roles that female physicians continue to play as both medical professionals and primary home makers/child caregivers. Studies show that female physicians take on an average of 8.5 hours more work at home each week than do male physicians, significantly contributing to burnout risk. Married male physicians with children spend seven hours longer at work and spend 12 hours fewer per week on parenting or domestic duties than do

female physicians with children (*Why women leave medicine. Association of American Medical Colleges. October 1, 2019*).

While these variables exist in normal times and are known contributors to poor work-life balance and burnout, the added stressors of managing children consistently at home while operating during a long-term and worldwide public health crisis has fueled a significant increase in burnout rates.

Frequent Feelings of Burnout

	2021
Independent Physicians	56%
Employed Physicians	64%
Primary Care Physicians	66%
Specialist Physicians	59%
Male Physicians	57%
Female Physicians	69%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	64%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	59%

Despite increased rates of burnout, nearly half of those surveyed (46%) would still recommend medicine as a career option to young people. Nearly half of male physicians surveyed would recommend medicine as a career option for young people, indicating a significantly higher rate than female physicians.

Would Recommend Medicine as a Career

	2021
Male Physicians	49%
Female Physicians	43%

This represented a slight increase from the 2020 survey responses up from 44%. However, this is still significantly lower than the last recorded peak of 59% in 2014 as identified in results stemming from The Physician Foundation’s biennial survey.

Would Recommend Medicine as a Career to Young People

Year	%
2021	46%
2020	44%
2018	51%
2016	51%
2014	59%

* Data collected from the Physician Foundation’s biennial survey

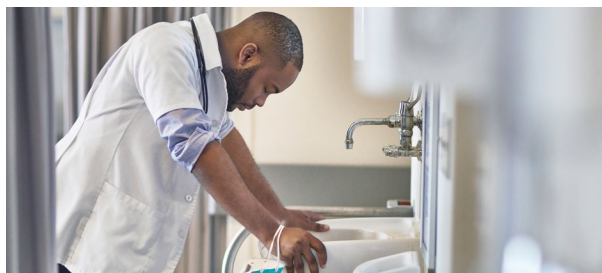
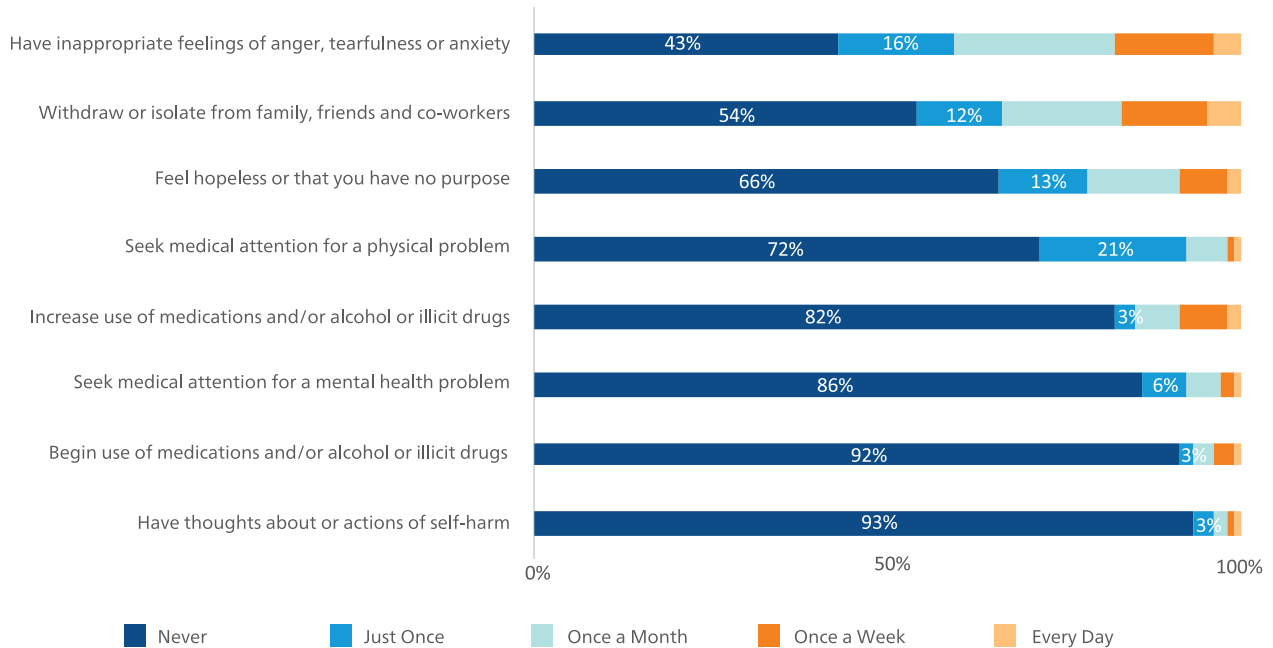
In The Physicians Foundation’s *2021 Survey of America’s Physicians*, survey responses identified that 23% of physicians across demographic groups indicated they would like to retire within the next year. Twenty-seven percent of independent physicians indicated they would like to retire within the next year, a significantly higher percentage than employed physicians. One-third of physicians 46 years old or older would like to retire within the next year.

In July 2020, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) released a report projecting a shortage of up to 139,000 physicians by 2033 (*The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand Projections From 2018- 2033*). This is an increase over its 2019 report, which forecasted a shortage of 121,900 physicians by 2032. Given this looming shortage, it continues to be important that physicians remain in patient care roles for the duration of what in the past have typically been decades-long careers.



Any acceleration of physician retirements due to burnout would exacerbate the physician shortage at a time when more physicians will be needed to provide care for an aging population with an anticipated high rate of chronic health problems such as Alzheimer’s and cardiovascular disease. These problems are likely to worsen due to the direct effects of COVID-19 on patient health, as well as the indirect effects of increased unemployment, poverty and other social determinants of health.

Q4: How often have the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on your practice or professional employment caused you to do any of the following?



Over the past year, nearly one-fifth of physicians have had inappropriate feelings of anger, tearfulness or anxiety on a weekly or daily basis because of COVID-19. This proportion is higher among primary care and employed physicians due potentially in part to the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 patients.

More than half of physicians experienced some form of mental health problem because of COVID-19. Fifty-seven percent identified they have felt inappropriate feelings of anger, tearfulness or anxiety because of COVID-19. At least three in ten have withdrawn or isolated themselves from others and or/felt hopeless or without a purpose. However, despite the high incidence of mental health problems, only 14% of physicians ultimately sought medical attention.

Had Inappropriate Feelings of Anger, Tearfulness or Anxiety

	2021
Independent Physicians	15%
Employed Physicians	19%
Primary Physicians	21%
Specialist Physicians	17%

A similar proportion of physicians reported withdrawing or isolating from others, with this proportion being only slightly higher among primary care and employed physicians:

Withdrew or Isolated from Family, Friends and Coworkers

	2021
Independent Physicians	14%
Employed Physicians	18%
Primary Physicians	19%
Specialist Physicians	16%

Female physicians also indicated they are significantly more likely than male physicians to have experienced inappropriate feelings and withdrawing/being isolated from others:

Inappropriate Feelings of Anger, Tearfulness or Anxiety/Withdrawal or Isolation from Family, Friends and Coworkers

	Inappropriate Feelings	Withdrawal or Isolation
Male Physicians	15%	15%
Female Physicians	23%	22%

Specialists and independent physicians are less likely than primary care and employed physicians to have gone through most of the respective experiences described here as a result of COVID-19.

It is not uncommon for people to use self-medication as a coping mechanism for stress and as an alternative to seeking mental health care, and physicians are no different. Eight percent of physicians surveyed indicated they began use of

medications, alcohol or illicit drugs as a result of COVID-19's effects on their practice or employment situation, showing a 2% drop from last year. Two percent did so just once, while 6% did so once a month or more, indicating minimal percentage change compared to last year.

Eight percent of physicians indicated they have increased their use of medications, alcohol or illicit drugs weekly as a result of COVID-19's effects on their practice or employment situation, showing that reported increased usage actually decreased significantly (10%) compared to last year.

Increased Use of Medications and/or Alcohol or Illicit Drugs on a Weekly Basis

	2021
Male Physicians	8%
Female Physicians	9%

The survey suggests that some physicians are continuing to turn to medications, alcohol or illicit drugs in response to the effects of COVID-19 on their practices or employment situations at higher rates than they are seeking medical attention for mental health problems.

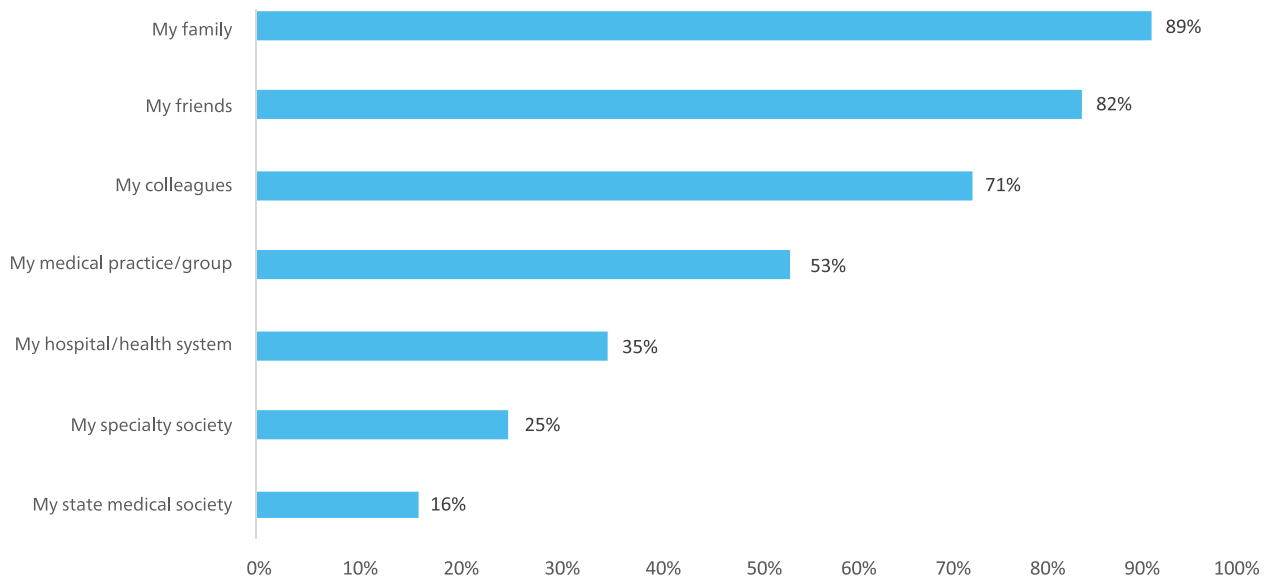
With the exception of seeking medical attention for a physical problem, older physicians indicated they are more likely than younger physicians to not have gone through these experiences as a result of COVID-19.

It should be reiterated that all responses included throughout this survey were made by physicians specifically assessing how their wellbeing, practice or employment situations have been affected one year into the COVID-19 pandemic. They do not

necessarily reflect how the pandemic is affecting physicians in other contexts outside of their work environments, such as their personal plans, the political direction the nation is taking as a result of the virus, how the pandemic will affect their children's futures and other concerns. These may be additional causes of stress for physicians, as they are for many other people.



Q5: Rate how the following have been of help to your mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.



Like other professionals, physicians have various people or organizations that may help them to maintain their wellbeing during challenging times. The vast majority of physicians across all surveyed demographic groups identified their family, friends and colleagues as the most helpful resources available to their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. Medical practices/groups (53%) and hospitals/health systems (35%) round out the top five of the most helpful external factors to physician mental health and wellbeing.



Feelings about their state medical society varied between independent practice owners and employed physicians:

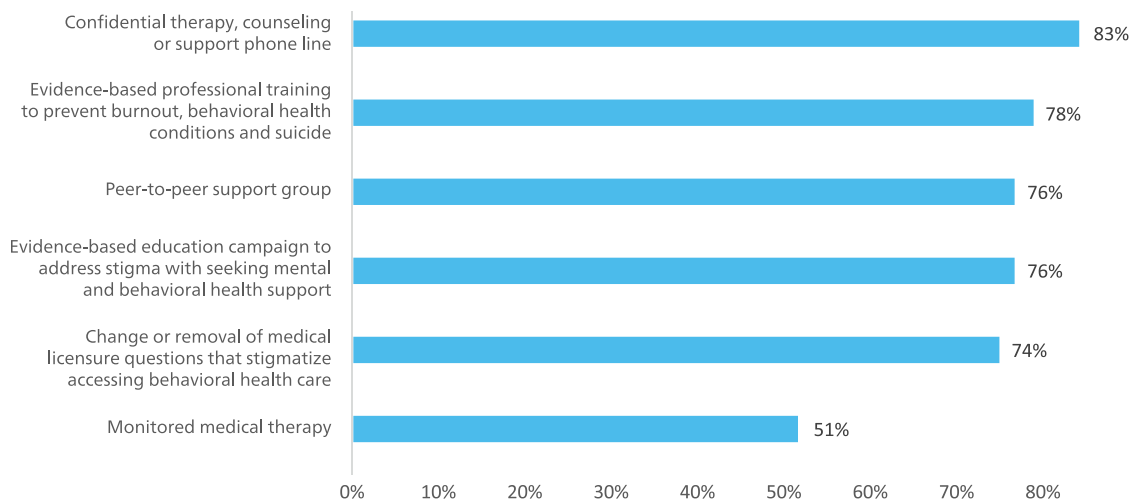
Helpfulness of State Medical Society During Pandemic

	2021
Employed Physicians	15%
Independent Physicians	20%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	15%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	17%

A significantly larger proportion of younger physicians than older physicians found the respective resources helpful to their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. More female physicians than male physicians found their colleagues and specialty society options to be a source of support for them during this time, indicating they were more likely to use those resources.



Q6: Rate how the following strategies and resources would be important for you and other physicians to address mental health conditions, burnout and/or prevent suicide.



In The Physicians Foundation’s *2021 Survey of America’s Physicians*, responses on average placed consistently high importance on each of the strategies and resources listed in addressing mental health conditions, burnout and/or preventing suicide, with the exception of monitored medical therapy. Monitored medical therapy is typically defined as having physician-monitored use of mental health medications.



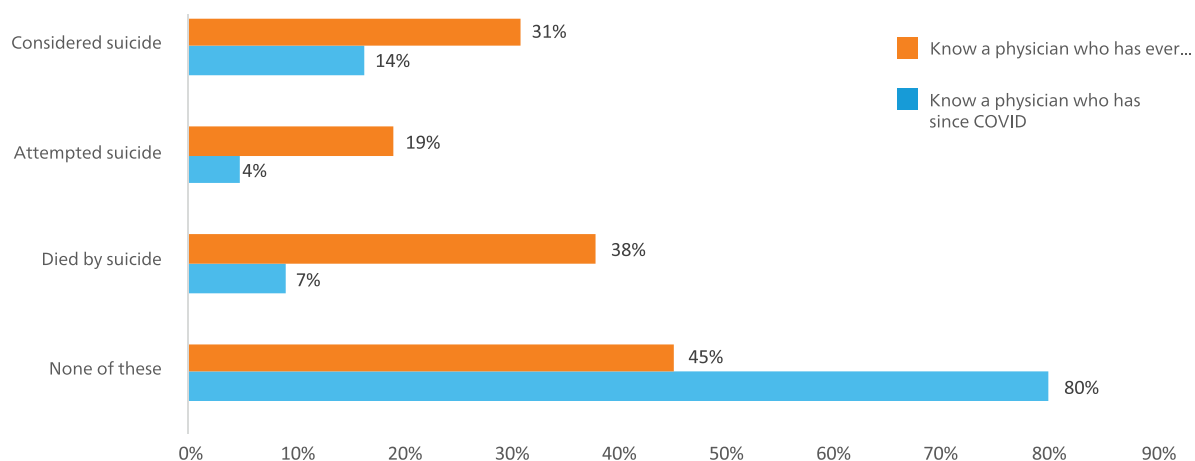
Primary care and employed physicians reported higher importance on average than specialists and independent physicians across most of the strategies and resources listed for addressing mental health conditions, burnout and/or preventing suicide.

Confidential therapy, counseling or accessibility of a support phone line was consistently identified as the most valuable resource available to physicians across surveyed demographic groups.

Additional resources, such as evidence-based professional training to prevent burnout, behavioral health conditions and suicide, peer-to-peer support groups and evidence-based educational campaigns to address stigma with seeking mental/behavioral health support were identified by physicians overall as important to their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.

As expected, younger physicians and female physicians continue to place higher importance on availability and accessibility of mental health resources and strategies than older physicians and male physicians for addressing mental health conditions, burnout and/or preventing suicide.

Q7: Do you know a physician who has EVER versus IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS SINCE COVID-19...



The *2021 Survey of America’s Physicians* indicated that over half of physicians (55%), knew of a physician that had considered, attempted or died by suicide ever in the course of their career. Twenty percent went on to

indicate they knew a physician who either considered, attempted or died by suicide since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On average, more employed physicians than independent physicians know of a physician who has considered, attempted or died by suicide, ever or since COVID-19. Primary care and employed physicians reported a higher percentage rate of knowing a physician who considered suicide since COVID-19 as compared to general knowledge prior to the pandemic.

% of total respondents who know a physician who has considered, attempted or died by suicide ever	% of total respondents who know a physician who has considered, attempted or died by suicide since the start of COVID-19
55%	20%

Note: respondents were able to select more than one (e.g., if selected both 'attempted' and 'died', they are counted once in the % of total physicians)

Personal Knowledge of a Physician Who Considered Suicide

	Ever	COVID-19
Employed Physicians	32%	16%
Independent Physicians	27%	9%
Primary Physicians	32%	16%
Specialist Physicians	30%	12%
Male Physicians	29%	12%
Female Physicians	33%	17%
Physicians ≤45 Years Old	36%	18%
Physicians 46+ Years Old	26%	10%

Seventeen percent of female physicians reported knowing a physician who has considered suicide since COVID-19 as compared to male physicians at only 12%. In general, a larger proportion of younger

(9%) and female (10%) physicians know a physician who has died by suicide since COVID-19. Survey findings report that younger physicians are also more likely to know someone who has attempted suicide at some point in time.

The suicide rate among male physicians is still approximately 1.41 times higher than the general male population. Among female physicians, the relative risk is even more pronounced — approximately 2.27 times greater than the general female population. (*Suicide Rates Among Physicians: A Quantitative and Gender Assessment (Meta-Analysis)*. *American Journal of Psychiatry AJP*, 161(12), 2295-2302. doi:10.1176/ appi.ajp.161.12.2295).

The 2021 survey indicates female physicians are still more likely to know a physician who has considered suicide, attempted suicide or committed suicide at higher rates than male physicians. Not coincidentally, they also experience higher rates of burnout than do male physicians.



CONCLUSION

The Physicians Foundation's *2021 Survey of America's Physicians* indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic not only continues to exert a heavy toll on physician wellbeing and professional fulfillment, but also has shined a bright light on the stigma still associated with medical professionals seeking mental health care. Difficult working conditions such as a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and caring for patients who may be seriously ill for weeks—along with burdensome administrative tasks, long hours and grief over losing patients—have become the norm, but little has been done to alleviate the heavy mental health toll on physicians. The effects of COVID-19 on their practices or employment situations have caused an increase in the number of physicians to more than half (57% up from 50% in 2020) experiencing inappropriate episodes of anger, tearfulness and anxiety; caused a 3% increase to 46% of physicians to withdraw from family, friends or coworkers since 2020; an increase to 34% to experiencing hopelessness as compared to 30% in 2020; and a 4% increase to 28% to seeking medical attention for a physical problem. Despite the acknowledgement of mental health issues, only a mere 14% of physicians took the opportunity to seek medical attention for mental health issues.

There has been an incredible increase in the majority of physicians (61% up from 40% in 2018) who often experience burnout. However, nearly half of respondents indicated they would still recommend medicine as a career to young people and only 23%, a decrease from 38% in 2020, would like to retire in the next year.

Further, in the past 12 months, approximately 20% of physicians know of a physician who has either

considered, attempted or died by suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically, compared to the 55% of physicians who know of a physician who has ever considered, attempted or died by suicide throughout the course of their career.

Findings of the *2021 Survey of America's Physicians* continue to reinforce two public health concerns that have plagued physicians for decades. The first is that a decline in physician wellbeing and an increase in physician burnout levels have consistently been linked to poor health care outcomes. It is in the public's interest to help maintain physician wellbeing and lower levels of physician burnout because healthy, engaged physicians generally provide better care than unhealthy, disengaged physicians. The COVID-19 pandemic placed a spotlight on the unequal distribution of labor between male and female physicians, identifying female physicians as often experiencing higher rates of burnout than their male counterparts. This may be due in part to the dual roles that female physicians continue to play as both medical professionals and primary child caregivers.

A second public health concern regards physician suicide. Physician suicide has been a public health crisis long before the COVID-19 pandemic. As found in *The Physicians Foundation's 2020 Survey of America's Physicians: COVID-19's Impact on Physician Wellbeing*, nearly one in four physicians knew a physician who has died by suicide. On average, more employed physicians than independent physicians know of a physician who has considered, attempted or died by suicide, ever or since COVID-19. Primary care and employed physicians reported a higher percentage rate of

knowing a physician who considered suicide since COVID-19 as compared to reported data prior to the pandemic. Left untreated, burnout can cause more cases of depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance use and suicidal thoughts for physicians. It is estimated that approximately 1 million Americans lose their physician to suicide each year.

One positive outcome from the COVID-19 pandemic has been the increased adoption of telehealth options by physicians across demographic groups. Seventy-five percent of physicians who are 45 years of age or under

and 74% of female physicians indicated they overwhelmingly expect to continue using telehealth in their practices, creating more standard options for patients to access care.

Given the high levels of stress, burnout, physical and mental harm caused to physicians by COVID-19, it is clear that more must be done to foster and promote physician wellbeing, for the good of the public and for physicians themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The 2021 survey was sent by email to a list of physicians derived from Medscape’s proprietary database. Medscape leveraged the AMA’s distribution of percentage of PCPs vs Specialists to set quotas for this study. The survey was fielded from May 26 to June 9, 2021, and the data presented is based on 2,504 responses. For detailed demographic breakdown of respondents, see page 20.

For the purposes of this survey report, responses addressing gender demographics will be identified using the binary terms male and female.

Responses by Physician Type

PRACTICE	2021
Primary Care	36%
Specialty	64%

Thirty-six percent of physicians who responded to the survey practice primary care, defined in this survey as family medicine, general practice,

internal medicine or pediatrics, while the remaining 64% identified as a practicing physician in one of the following specialties: Addiction Medicine, Allergy/Immunology, Cardiology, Dermatology, Endocrinology/Diabetes, Gastroenterology, OB-GYN, Orthopedics/Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology/ENT, Pain Management/Pain Medicine, Pathology, Intensive Care/Critical Care, Infectious Disease, Interventional Cardiology, Nephrology, Neurology, Nuclear Medicine, Pediatric subspecialties, Rheumatology, Urology, HIV/AIDS Specialists, Transplant Surgery, Gynecology Oncology, Oncology/Hematology, Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology or Surgical Oncology.

Responses by Gender

GENDER	2021
Male	64%
Female	34%
Other/Prefer not to answer	2%

Sixty-four percent of physicians who responded to the survey are male, 34% are female, and two percent indicated they are gender non-binary, other or preferred to not designate a gender. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, approximately 36% of all practicing physicians in the U.S. are female, indicating females physicians are appropriately represented in the survey.

Responses by Practice Status

PRACTICE STATUS	2021
Employed	67%
Independent	26%
Other	7%

Twenty-six percent of physicians who responded to the survey are independent or private practice owners, while 67% indicated they are employed by a hospital, a hospital-owned medical group, a physician-owned medical group or are in some other status. Approximately 7% of respondents preferred to not designate a practice status.

Responses by Age

AGE	2021
18 – 35	16%
36 – 45	30%
46 – 55	24%
56 – 64	17%
65+	13%

The ages of survey respondents generally correspond to the ages of all physicians.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

	Total	PCP (A)	Specialist (B)	Independent (C)	Employed (D)	≤45 Yrs. Old (E)	46+ Yrs. Old (F)	Male (G)	Female (H)
Base	(n=2504)	(n=903)	(n=1601)	(n=651)	(n=1672)	(n=1163)	(n=1341)	(n=1599)	(n=850)
Specialty									
<i>PCPs</i>	36%	100%	–	30%	37% ^C	35%	37%	32%	44% ^G
<i>Specialists</i>	64%	–	100%	70% ^D	63%	65%	63%	68% ^H	57%
Practice Type									
<i>Independent</i>	26%	22%	28% ^A	28%	100%	–	36% ^E	29% ^H	18%
<i>Employed</i>	67%	68%	66%	–	100%	84% ^F	52%	64%	71% ^G
Age									
<i>≤45 Yrs. Old</i>	47%	45%	48%	21%	58% ^C	100%	–	42%	55% ^G
<i>46+ Yrs. Old</i>	53%	55%	52%	79% ^D	42%	–	100%	58% ^H	45%
Gender[^]									
<i>Male</i>	65%	58%	70% ^A	74% ^D	63%	59%	71% ^E	100%	–
<i>Female</i>	35%	42% ^B	31%	26%	37% ^C	41% ^F	30%	–	100%

MARGIN OF ERROR ASSESSMENT

The sample for this study of N=2504 represents the Medscape online population with a margin of error of ±1.958%, at a 95% confidence level. The survey used a point estimate (a statistic) of 50%, given a binomial distribution.

ABOUT THE PHYSICIANS FOUNDATION

The Physicians Foundation is a nonprofit seeking to advance the work of practicing physicians and help them facilitate the delivery of high-quality health care to patients. As the health care system in America continues to evolve, The Physicians Foundation is steadfast in its determination to strengthen the physician-patient relationship and assist physicians in sustaining their medical practices in today's practice environment. It pursues its mission through a variety of activities including grant-making, research, white papers and policy studies. Since 2005, the Foundation has awarded numerous multi-year grants totaling more than \$50 million. In addition, the Foundation focuses on the following core areas: physician leadership, physician wellness, physician practice trends, social determinants of health and the impact of health care reform on physicians and patients.

For more information, visit www.physiciansfoundation.org.

Signatory Medical Societies of The Physicians Foundation include:

- Alaska State Medical Association
- California Medical Association
- Connecticut State Medical Society
- Denton County Medical Society (Texas)
- El Paso County Medical Society (Colorado)
- Florida Medical Association
- Hawaii Medical Association
- Louisiana State Medical Society
- Medical Association of Georgia
- Medical Society of New Jersey
- Medical Society of the State of New York
- Nebraska Medical Association
- New Hampshire Medical Society
- North Carolina Medical Society
- Northern Virginia Medical Societies
- South Carolina Medical Association
- Tennessee Medical Association
- Texas Medical Association
- Vermont Medical Society
- Washington State Medical Association

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