Ohio Coalition is Addressing Physician Burnout

(COLUMBUS, OH, Jan. 4, 2019) – The Ohio Physician Wellness Coalition (OPWC) was established last year to address physician burnout. This week, the Coalition—which represents physicians and hospitals statewide—launched www.ohiophysicianwellness.org, a website with a large collection of resources and assessment tools to tackle this often hidden, but very real, problem.

According to the Mayo Clinic, burnout affects physicians at all levels of training and at various stages of their careers: 28-45 percent of medical students; 27-75 percent of residents; and about 37 percent of attending physicians. A recent study also concluded that physicians are spending 49 percent of their time on administrative tasks and only 27 percent with their patients.

Physicians are facing myriad problems that have led to burnout and even suicide, such as ever-increasing regulatory demands, loss of autonomy, decreased reimbursement, and a physician shortage within the next decade. Burned-out physicians provide care less effectively for their patients, which then creates less adequate patient-physician relationships (something that is so crucial, especially in Ohio, where we face an opioid epidemic), and they have less satisfying personal lives, which also affects their families and loved ones.

The Coalition members agree there clearly is a need for change — to change physicians’ workload and the environment in which they practice medicine.

Dr. Christina Delos Reyes, Chair of the Ohio Physicians Health Program (OPHP), and a member of the OPWC Physician Advisory Council, said a multifaceted approach is necessary to address burnout. “As we work together to find meaningful solutions, the OPWC is facing this issue head-on,” she said. “The website is our first step. Early next year, we’ll have a series of educational videos focusing on specific topics like boundaries, mental health, time management, vulnerability, and gratitude.” Additional initiatives to address this important issue are also under review by the OPWC.
To address regulatory issues, OPWC has partnered with the Medical Association Coalition (MAC), a group dedicated to monitoring legislation and agency rules that impact physicians, their practice, and their patients. More information on the MAC is available on the OPWC website.

OPWC members include the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio; Columbus Medical Association; Ohio Academy of Family Physicians; Ohio Hospital Association; Ohio Osteopathic Association; Ohio Physicians Health Program; Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association; Ohio State Medical Association; Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; and Ohio Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians.

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*The purpose of the Ohio Physician Wellness Coalition (OPWC) is to address physician burnout and provide physician wellness initiatives.*