

# Burnout and Stress: Providing Physician Support Through LifeBridge Nebraska



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The launch of NMA's LifeBridge Nebraska program is well underway. The overarching objective of LifeBridge Nebraska is to support the wellbeing of physicians through engagement and by helping them to adopt a proactive approach for taking care of themselves throughout their

lives. After extensive discussions and exploration of issues and needs related to physician health, it was determined the best path toward positive, effective support for physicians was to train physician coaches to work with their physician peers who may be experiencing burnout and stress.

Stress-induced burnout among physicians, physicians-in-training, and medical students is not new, but until recently, it was generally assumed to be infrequent, overlooked, and controllable. Isolation, guilt, and despair can be overwhelming while providing medical care and decision making. In rural settings, physicians often experience incredible exhaustion from being on call and the overwhelming demands of practice. Physicians often suffer in silence when patients do not do well—and struggle to find comfort in the process. Unrelenting administrative burdens, the use of electronic medical records, and increasing regulations compound everyday pressures.

Physicians are often described as having the compulsive triad of self-doubt, guilt, and exaggerated sense of responsibility. Many physicians are at risk to suffer from stress and burnout, as they have personality traits of idealism, independence, inability to delegate, people-pleasing, and work imbalance. Burnout can appear as unexplained underperformance. It leaves physicians feeling depleted, detached, cynical, and like they are “going through the motions.”

**DISINTEREST** describes a physician who is burned out:

- Decreased sense of humor
- Increased physical problems (fatigue, infections)
- Social withdrawal
- Increased workload
- Not accomplishing as much
- Tension
- Emotional exhaustion
- Reduced sleep
- Easily offended
- Skipping meals and rest breaks
- Tranquilizer/Alcohol use

The consequences of long periods of excessive work stress and burnout could have serious outcomes for the wellness of individual physicians. Substance related concerns, relationship troubles, illness, and depression are

just a few of the issues that may occur. Also, it is important to address physician stress and burnout so that physicians can care for patients optimally.

LifeBridge Nebraska offers confidential access to any of four trained physician coaches representing various specialties and practice settings. The trained physician coaches address physicians who are experiencing burnout and distress, as well as those who are seeking preventive measures

in order to be proactive.

Just as physicians encourage their patients to implement preventive strategies to improve health outcomes or eliminate illness, the same is true in dealing with stress and burnout. The coaching program through LifeBridge Nebraska addresses individualized, confidential strategies to manage stress and enhance resilience through self-care, along with a focus on preventative measures.



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Coaching sessions may center around several topics, such as:

- gaining clarity in your purpose;
- achieving your health & fitness goals;
- igniting passion in your relationships;
- becoming a more effective leader; and
- preparing, implementing, and maintaining changes.

If a physician is experiencing a more serious problem, a referral will be made to ensure they can receive the appropriate level of help needed.

Overall, as the LifeBridge Nebraska program continues to grow and expand, the phases that follow will be designed to address the specific needs of Nebraska physicians by focusing on the pillars identified by the acronym CURE:

By creating a more desirable, unified culture with promotion and self-care, LifeBridge Nebraska encourages

the wellbeing of physicians while:

- educating and increasing awareness of physician health and well-being;
- seeking and using coaching when needed;
- learning and using practice skills from coaching sessions;
- designating time for reflection/rest/recovery;
- building a community of unity within medicine;
- improving workplace environment; and
- creating a healthy culture.

Contact LifeBridge Nebraska to build upon your stress management skills, improve the quality of your life, and to benefit from the self-care you desire. Confidential appointments are self-referred without medical diagnoses, insurance billing, or electronic records.

**Connect with LifeBridge Nebraska**  
**1-888-569-2036**

