



## ADVANCING HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WELLBEING

### The Importance of Healthcare Workforce Wellbeing: A Vital Component for the Health of Arizona

The Wellbeing Collaborative of Arizona believes that healthcare workforce wellbeing should be an important consideration in every national, state, local, and health organization policy decision.

Building off of the **U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Addressing Health Worker Burnout**<sup>3</sup>, and the **National Plan for Health Workforce Wellbeing** from the National Academy of Medicine<sup>1</sup>, we promote multiple efforts to transform health systems, health education, and training.

#### EIGHT ACTIONS TO ADVANCE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WELLBEING

1. Increase awareness of the need to prevent and reduce unnecessary **regulatory and systemic burdens**. Work to improve workforce wellbeing by reducing **stigma** and eliminating licensure and credentialing questions about mental health, and by removing barriers for the health workers seeking treatment to address mental health challenges.
2. Recruit, invest and retain a diverse and **inclusive healthcare workforce** by promoting careers in the health professions and **increasing pathways and systems** for a diverse, inclusive, and thriving workforce.
3. Invest in measurement, assessment, strategies, and **research** to expand the uptake of **best practices** for decreasing health worker burnout and improving wellbeing and retention.
4. **Develop healthcare leaders** who use best practices to create **positive** work environments, transform cultures to foster professional wellbeing, and sustain our current and emerging healthcare workforce.
5. Prioritize and invest in efforts to **prevent and reduce burnout**, foster professional wellbeing, and support quality care.
6. **Engage practical technology tools** to optimize and expand the use of health information technologies that support high-quality patient care and population health solutions while minimizing technologies that inhibit clinical decision-making or add to administrative burden.
7. **Incorporate wellbeing** as a long-term value to address the toll on healthcare workforce

wellbeing now and to bolster the public health and healthcare systems for the future healthcare needs of an increasingly elderly and growing population in Arizona.

## HOW WE GOT HERE

Emergencies, natural disasters, and pandemics have brought to light the needs of health workers. The healthcare workforce across the nation and in Arizona has for decades been reporting a loss of meaning in healthcare work due to overwhelming professional demands, administrative burdens, and limited supportive resources. According to the National Academy of Medicine<sup>1</sup>, and even before the pandemic, up to 54% of U.S. nurses and physicians, 60% of medical students and residents, and 61-75% of pharmacists have symptoms of burnout—high emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (e.g., cynicism), and a low sense of personal accomplishment at work.

When encountered, long hours, moral injury, inefficiencies, bullying, harassment, threats, and violence, as well as racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination have created a challenging professional environment<sup>2</sup> in our hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities. The CDC reported that 44.2% of health workers reported being likely to look for a new job in 2022 due to their negative working conditions.<sup>3</sup> This ultimately negatively affects the quality and experiences of healthcare for all patients<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, an erosion of trust and respect between the public and health workers has further deteriorated the wellbeing of the very people who are dedicated to serving the interests of patients and the health of Arizona, leading to high turnover rates and staff shortages.<sup>5</sup> In Arizona, our healthcare workforce shortages are especially alarming, putting access to healthcare, particularly in rural areas, and quality of care at risk in the coming years. Arizona is currently experiencing severe workforce shortages of physicians, nurses, behavioral health, public health, and other healthcare workers.<sup>6</sup> According to an Arizona Board of Regents analysis, Arizona will need 14,291 registered nurses, 3,644 physicians, and 2,419 behavioral health workers, among others, by 2030 to fill its healthcare worker shortage. In Arizona, the population of adults over 65 has increased from 13% in 2000 to 19% in 2022 and is expected to continue growing. This growth will lead to an increased demand for healthcare services.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout- A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being. 2019

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/25521/taking-action-against-clinician-burnout-a-systems-approach-to-professional>

<sup>2</sup> Physicians Experience with Mistreatment and Discrimination. JAMA Network Open. 2022;5(5):e2213080. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.13080

<sup>3</sup> Vital Signs: Health worker-perceived working conditions and symptoms of poor mental health- quality of worklife survey, US 2018-2022. November 3, 2023/72(44):1197-1205

<sup>4</sup> Addressing Health Worker Burnout. The US Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Thriving Health Workforce. 2022

<sup>5</sup> Arizona is already experiencing shortages in primary care, behavioral health and women's health and the gaps are only widening. <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/workforce-projections>

<sup>6</sup> A report from the Productivity and Prosperity Project (P3). ASU WP Carey School of Business. April 2024

<sup>7</sup> Brunner, K, Farley G The Economic Impact of Arizona's Health Care Sector, Common Sense Institute, July 2023, <https://commonsenseinstituteaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CSI-Report-AZ-Health-Care-Economic-Impact-Report-gf4.pdf>

## WHO WE ARE

The Wellbeing Collaborative of Arizona<sup>8</sup> is a local, all-volunteer group of **over 350 individuals representing 150 Arizona professional healthcare associations, hospitals, managed care companies, health departments, universities, front-line health professionals, leaders, and change-makers** who have come together to improve and strengthen the wellbeing of the Arizona healthcare workforce.

**Our vision:** We are building a wellbeing-centered health ecosystem in Arizona.

The Wellbeing Collaborative of Arizona amplifies the positive voices of the entirety of Arizona's healthcare professionals. Working with innovative organizations, we seek to empower health leaders, professionals, and key stakeholders to collaborate and transform healthcare workplaces and systems through a state-wide healthcare culture of wellbeing and equity.

## THANK YOU

We thank you for standing with us to promote solutions that achieve these goals, ensuring that Arizonans will have access to high-quality healthcare well into the future.



<https://wellbeingcollaborative.org/>

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<sup>8</sup> [wellbeingcollaborative.org](https://wellbeingcollaborative.org)