

James L. Holly, M.D.

How Can We Avoid Provider Burnout

During the 2017 Primary Care Week, The Bellue/Holly Distinguished Visiting Professor, Ronald Epstein, MD, Family Physician from Rochester School of Medicine, repeatedly addressed physician burnout. In a 7 AM Breakfast Discussion Roundtable, a first year medical student asked about how to avoid burnout.

I gave her my card and told her if she would write me, I would discuss “burnout.” At 74 years of age and still active in practice, I have thought about these issues. The four following articles address aspects of burnout:

1. This first article addresses the “sense of futility” and its source. Futility is the foundation of burnout. Principally, the mass of knowledge available to primary care can cause futility. The article examines the application of the principles of Peter Senge’s The Fifth Discipline to Primary healthcare: [Spanning the Specialties to Bring You the Best Standards](#)
2. This is a summary of SETMA’s four-hour visit with [Dr. Larry Leibrock - November 28, 2012 -- Follow-up to February 2000 Meeting in Austin](#)

This piece is more involved. It addresses our use of business principles and electronics to avoid futility and burnout.

Professional life is always a balance between stress and satisfaction. Futility is the result of stress out weighing satisfaction. No matter how much stress you experience as long as your professional satisfaction exceeds it, you will never burn out.

3. [The Hope of the Future of Medicine in Good Hands](#)

In addition to my comments, this contains Dr. Michael Lichtenstein’s Seven Actions You Can Take That Will Help You Succeed, delivered in his 2009 address to the Graduating Class at the Long School of Medicine

These 7 actions are very helpful and affirm some of what I have already told you.

4. [Can More Care Provide Less Health?](#) Why is Primary Care the answer to Health Care?

This is the first step in an ongoing discussion about preventing burnout.