

Overcoming Barriers to Physician Wellness Programs

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Florida Medical Society Executive – May 17, 2019

Learning Objectives

- Identify barriers to physician participation in wellness programs
- Identify barriers to administrative acceptance of PWP
- Learn methods to overcome barriers

Citations available on request: rebekahbernard@gmail.com

Physician Barriers

- Personality traits
- Culture of medical training
- Too busy
- “Self-treatment” or VIP treatment by colleagues
- Stigma
- Fear over repercussions
- Sense of futility

BARRIER:
Doctor
personality traits

- Perfectionism
- Fear of failure / not being perfect
- Self-reliance



SOLUTION:
Promote PWP
as a way to...



Improve patient
care

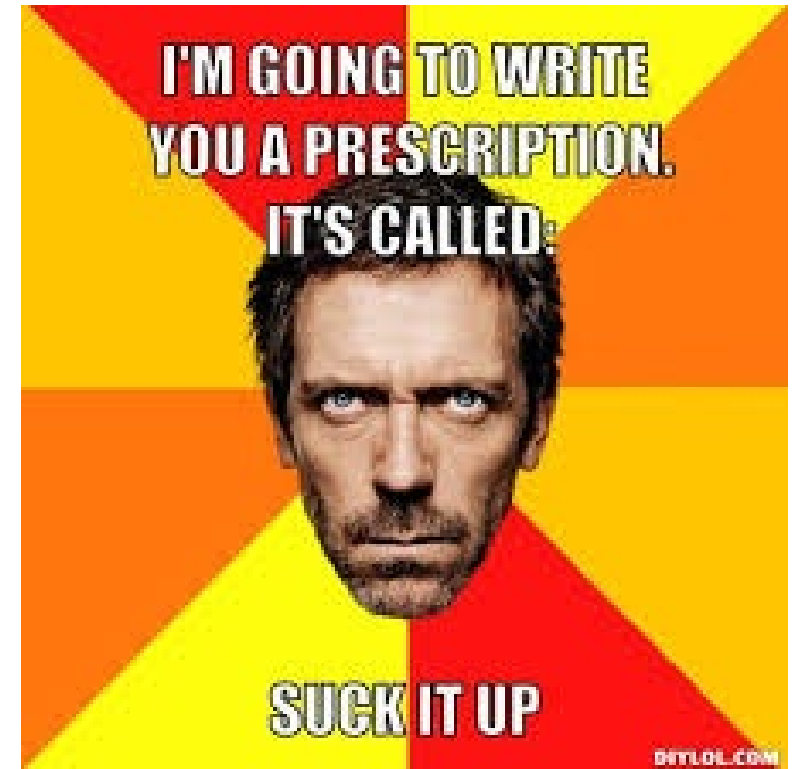


Improve practice
efficiency

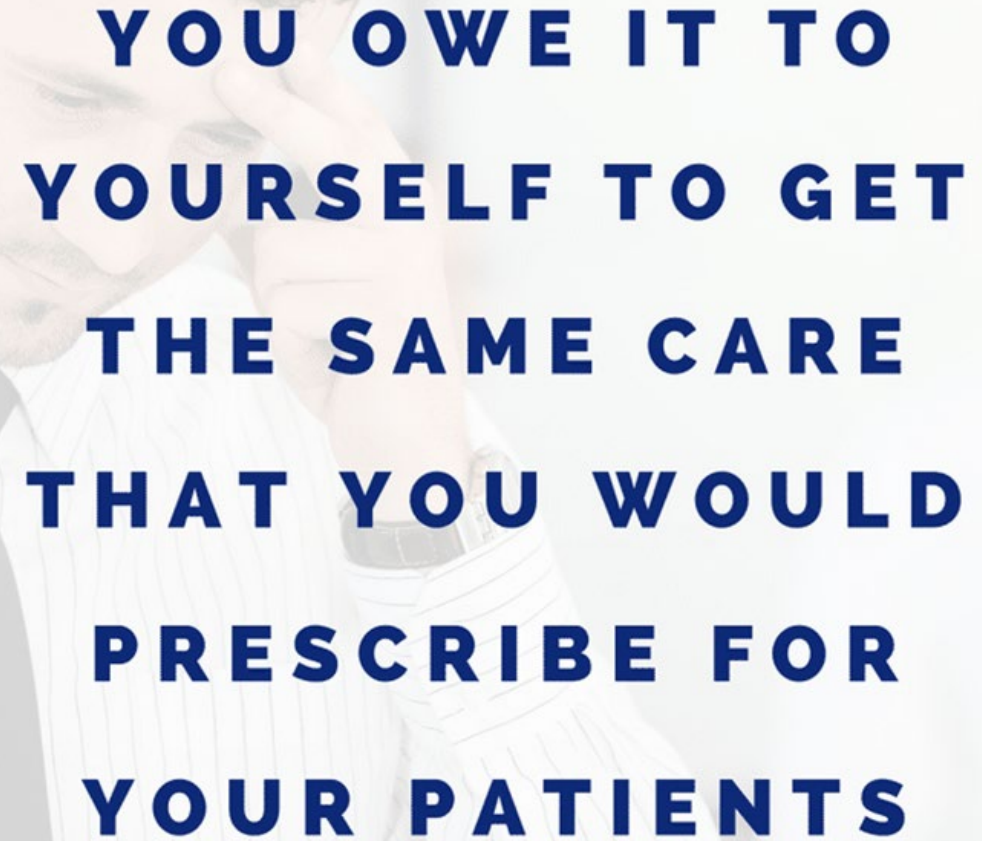


To be the best
doctor you can be

BARRIER:
Culture of
medical
training



SOLUTION:
Remind doctors -
This is what you
recommend to
your patients!



**YOU OWE IT TO
YOURSELF TO GET
THE SAME CARE
THAT YOU WOULD
PRESCRIBE FOR
YOUR PATIENTS**

Barrier:
Too busy



SOLUTION

- Make it easy to reach PWP
- Provide sessions outside of work hours
- Ensure that program location is easy to access

BARRIER: Repercussions/ stigma

WHEN IN DOUBT, DISCLOSE AND EXPLAIN

23. Have you ever been diagnosed with, treated for, or do you currently have: Yes No

Check each condition you have ever been diagnosed with, treated for, or currently have:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bipolar Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressive Neurosis | <input type="checkbox"/> Kleptomania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hypomania | <input type="checkbox"/> Any Dissociative Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Pyromania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schizophrenia | <input type="checkbox"/> Any Psychotic Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Delirium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Any Organic Mental Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Paranoia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal Affective | <input type="checkbox"/> Any condition requiring chronic medical or behavioral treatment | |

!

If you checked "Yes" to any of the above questions, you must attach a detailed explanation. You must also have your treating physician submit a letter directly to the Board regarding your ability to practice safely and competently. (See complete instructions on page 10.)

This is an actual US state licensing application.

SOLUTION



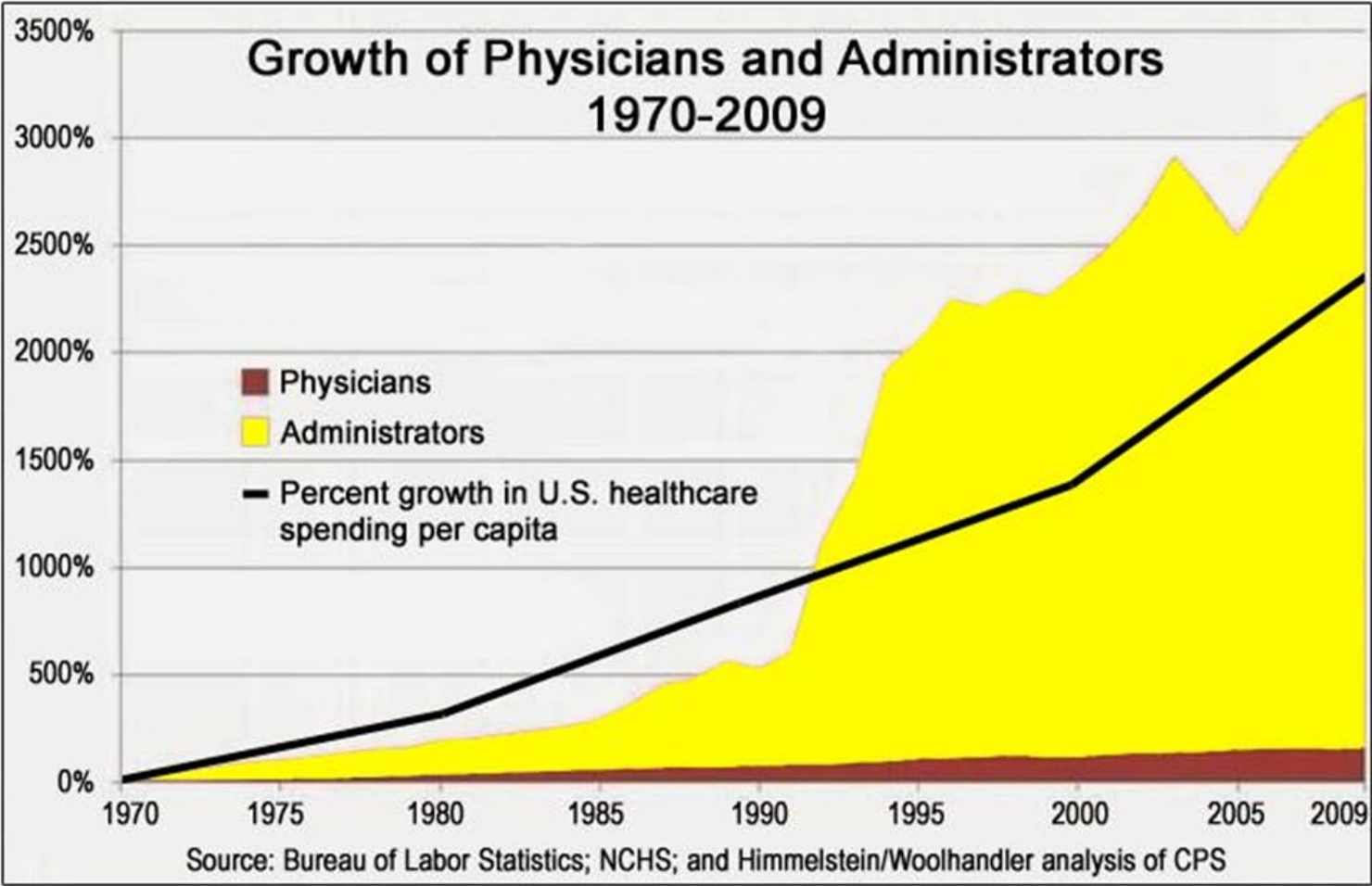
Ensure confidentiality



Remind doctors that participation is not reportable

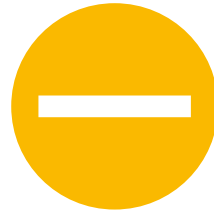
BARRIER:
Sense of
futility





* 2300% increase in U.S. healthcare spending per capita between 1970-2009 (Source: Health Care Costs: A Primer, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation)

SOLUTION



Acknowledge: We can't change the system, only the way we respond to it



But we CAN:

- Learn to set boundaries
- Learn to say "no"
- Develop off-loading techniques
- Consider alternatives to the system

Administrative barriers

- Developing buy-in
- Physician awareness
- Lack of understanding of psychology/ CBT
- Assumption that doctors can afford their own care
- Paying for the program
- Getting started

BARRIER:
Group
doesn't
believe PWP
is necessary



SOLUTION

1

Educate on physician
“burnout”

2

Explain that physicians
are leaving medicine
(48% in 2016 study)

3

Provide statistics on
physician depression
and suicide

- Doctors are good at hiding symptoms until it's too late

BARRIER: Lack of awareness



Even programs that are proactively marketed and offer financial incentives struggle with awareness

SOLUTION



Website, newsletter



Physician orientation



Reach physicians "where they are"



Physician champions

BARRIER:
Lack of
understanding
of psychology



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

SOLUTION

Explain: Psychology is NOT psychiatry (no meds)

Problems don't have to be work-related to impact work function

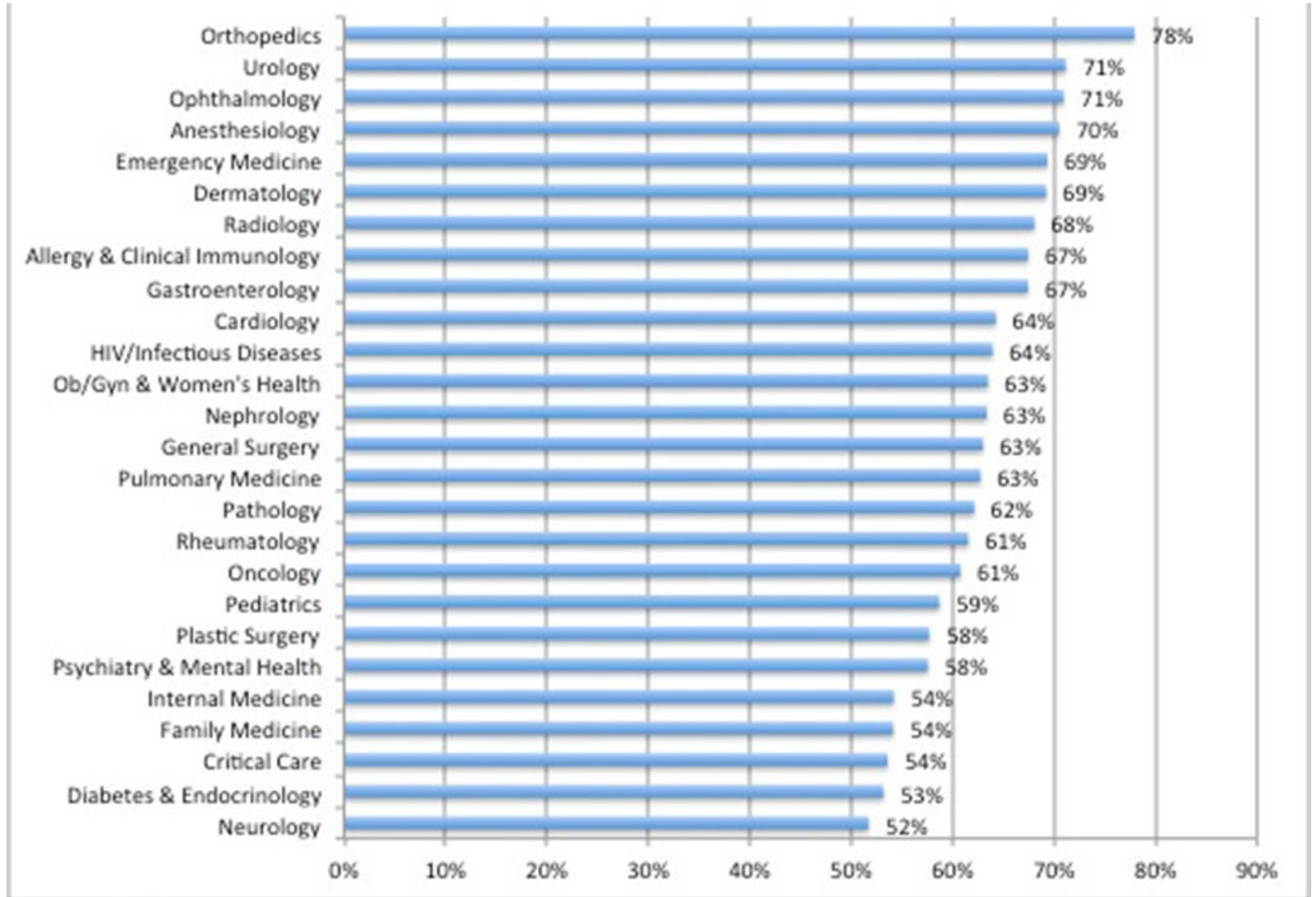
CBT WORKS!

BARRIER:
“Doctors can
afford it”



SOLUTION:

Realize that many physicians are financially struggling



Doctors reporting financial distress (Medscape 2016)

BARRIER:
Lack of
funds



SOLUTION



FUNDRAISERS



PARTNER WITH
CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION



GRANTS



ALLOW
PHYSICIANS TO
"PAY IT FORWARD"

BARRIER: Where to start?



SOLUTION



LifeBridge: Free toolkit for to create a confidential physician counseling service (medical societies, organizations)

<http://www.physicianwellnessprogram.org/>