



The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Health and Well-being of Ohio's Healthcare Workers®

State Medical Board of Ohio Summary



Preliminary research
completed by:



MIGHTY CROW

NOTHING BUT THE BEST

In October of 2020, the Ohio Physicians Health Program (OhioPHP), in partnership with Mighty Crow Media, put forth a proposal to conduct a statewide assessment of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic as it related to the impact the pandemic had on the health and well-being of healthcare professionals.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges within our healthcare system for patients and for healthcare professionals. Fear, loss, lack of personal protective equipment, ongoing surges, and much more have impacted everyone in ways we cannot even begin to understand. Preexisting levels of stress and burnout were further elevated as healthcare professionals faced this unknown and ever-challenging pandemic. Recognizing the need to know more about how to support our healthcare professionals in these fields, especially as it relates to their emotional welfare, became readily apparent.

OhioPHP received a grant from the Federation of State Medical Boards Foundation that supported the development of an online survey targeted at healthcare professionals across the state of Ohio to gauge their pandemic-related experiences, levels of stress, overall well-being, and knowledge and use of supportive resources. OhioPHP, in collaboration with 13 of Ohio's Professional Licensing Boards, launched the survey in July 2021. Between July 7, 2021, and August 20, 2021, 13,532 professionals responded to the survey. This report provides an overview of the findings.

SUMMARY

This report summarizes data collected from 2,865 respondents from the State Medical Board of Ohio (SMBO), which represents 21% of total survey respondents. Data was collected via an online survey administered statewide between July 7, 2021 and August 20, 2021.



66%
OF RESPONDENTS
WERE 35-64 YEARS OLD

AVERAGE NUMBER
OF YEARS IN THE FIELD
20

STATE MEDICAL BOARD OF OHIO LICENSE TYPES:

Physician
Acupuncturist
Anesthesiologist Assistant
Cosmetic Therapist
Dietician
Genetic Counselor
Massage Therapist
Oriental Medicine Practitioner
Physician Assistant
Radiologist Assistant
Respiratory Care Professional

TOP PARTICIPATION BY SPECIALTY:



56% Physicians/
Resident Physicians



15% Respiratory
Care Professionals

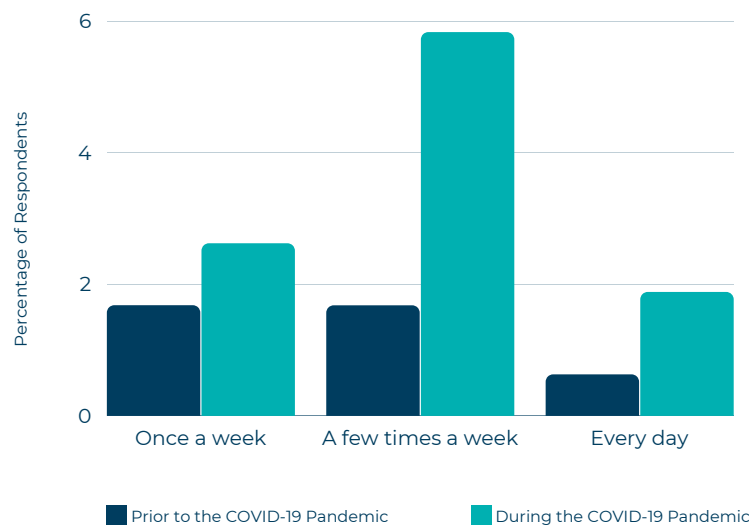


13% Massage Therapists

BURNOUT AMONG SMBO RESPONDENTS

Already a well-known issue among healthcare workers, burnout has dramatically accelerated during the pandemic. Far more workers reported feeling emotionally drained on a daily basis during the pandemic when compared to how they felt prior to the pandemic. Respondents were asked, “How often did you feel you did not really care what happens to patients?” Despite the essential nature of healthcare work, many professionals are finding less meaning in their jobs and feel apathetic while caring for patients.

APATHY TOWARDS PATIENTS



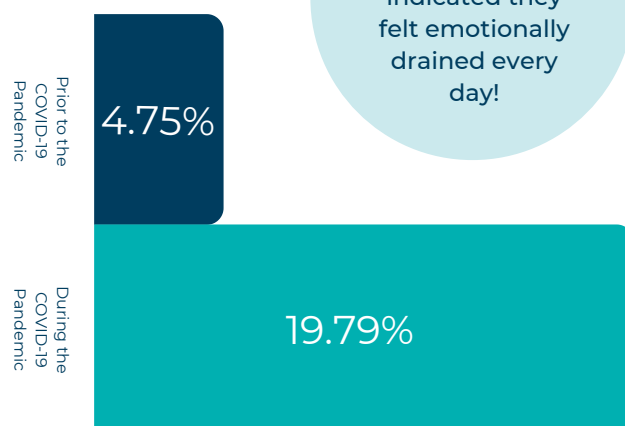
200%

increase in the number of SMBO respondents that reported not caring what happens to patients *every day* during the pandemic.

FEELING EMOTIONALLY DRAINED FROM WORK

317%

increase in the number of SMBO respondents that reported *feeling emotionally drained every day* during the pandemic.

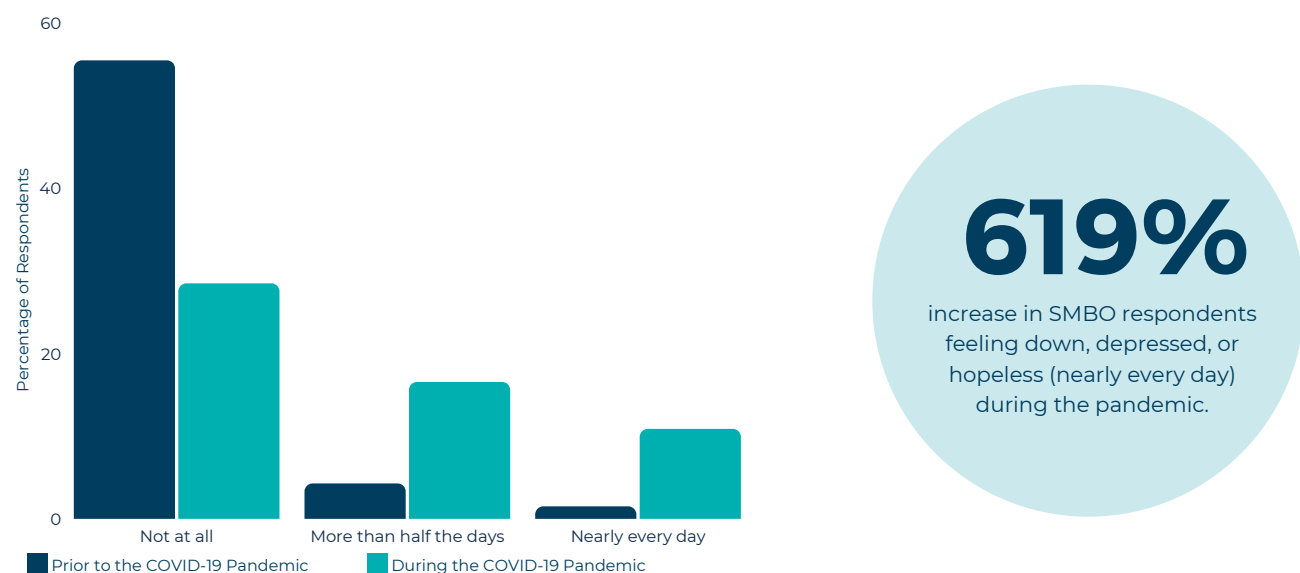


Nearly 20% of SMBO respondents indicated they felt emotionally drained every day!

A LOOK INTO MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

SMBO respondents overwhelmingly indicated they had an exacerbation of feeling down, depressed, and hopeless. Many respondents also indicated more concern for their own use of alcohol and other substances during the pandemic and some reported an increase in thoughts of suicide.

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT DOWN, DEPRESSED OR HOPELESS?



THOUGHTS OF DEATH OR SUICIDE

Due to concerns about healthcare workers experiencing an exacerbation in mental health issues, we thought it was imperative to assess suicide risk. Thoughts of suicide for respondents increased from 3.53% prior to the pandemic to 5.79% during the pandemic.

64%

Increase in thoughts of suicide among SMBO respondents during the pandemic.

INCREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE

Respondents' alcohol and other mood-altering substance use as a strategy for coping with work stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, etc., is of concern due to the negative impact it may have on one's mental health. 22% of respondents indicated an increase or significant increase in their substance use during the pandemic.

189%

increase in concerns about alcohol or substance use during the pandemic among SMBO respondents.

THE STATUS OF SMBO RESPONDENTS' WELL-BEING

WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT

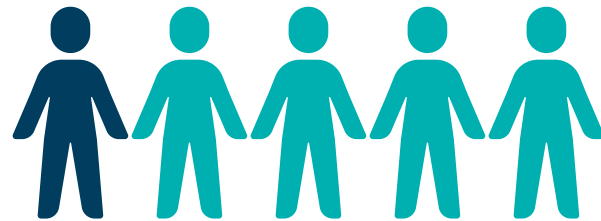
Survey respondents were asked about various stressors brought about by the pandemic. Our intention was to assess overall well-being and to see which factors played the biggest role in increasing the stress of healthcare workers.

44% of SMBO respondents had an increase in their workload.

Respondents were also asked about stressors during the pandemic and to rate these stressors from 'not a stressor' to 'extreme stressor'. Some of the top significant or extreme stressors for SMBO respondents during the pandemic were:

- Insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Fears of spreading COVID-19
- Lack of quality time with loved ones
- Being too tired

1 in 5

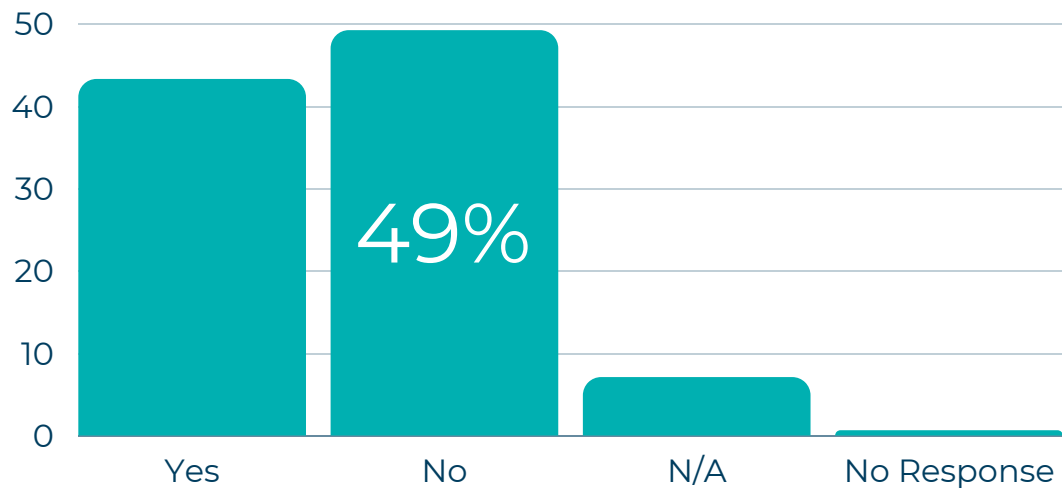


SMBO respondents experienced unemployment, being furloughed, or laid off during the pandemic.

52%

of SMBO respondents indicated that they did not feel personally acknowledged for the challenges they faced due to the pandemic.

DID YOU GET
ADEQUATE REST
FROM YOUR JOB?



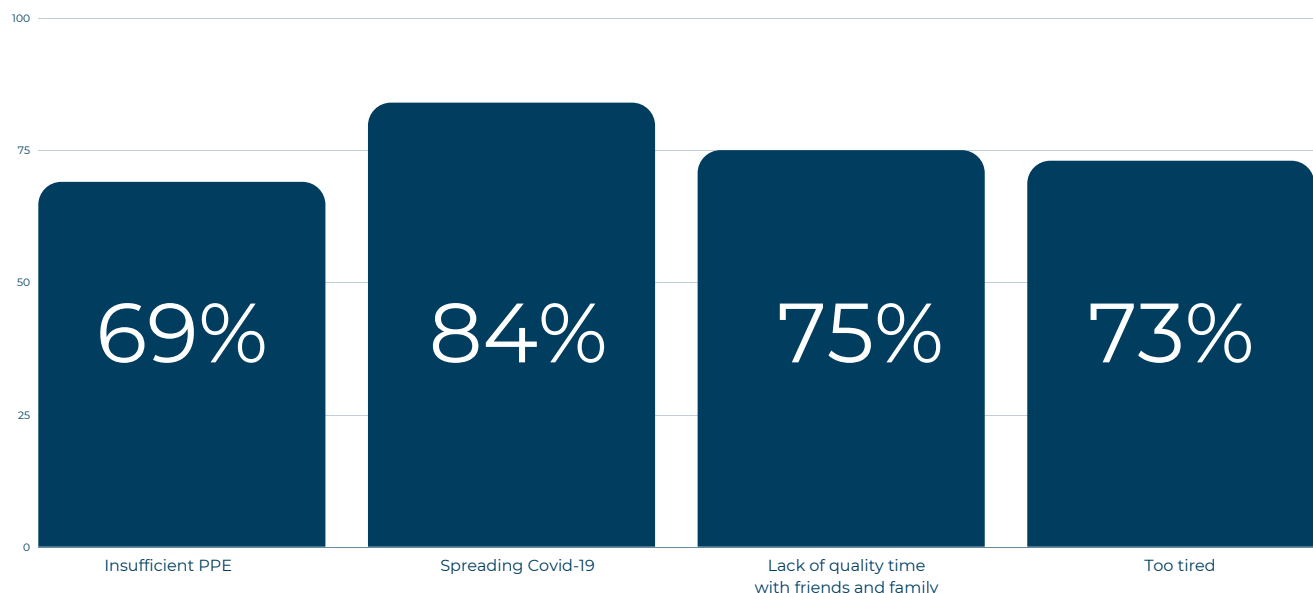
44%

of SMBO respondents surveyed indicated their workload increased or significantly increased during the pandemic

242%

increase in the number of SMBO respondents who never felt like they were accomplishing worthwhile things during the pandemic versus prior

STRESSORS DURING THE PANDEMIC



SEEKING SUPPORT

OhioPHP supports the health and wellness of healthcare professionals to enhance patient care and safety through connection to resources and services. OhioPHP aims for healthcare professionals to receive confidential and compassionate support to improve their health and well-being. Survey results provided insight into how few professionals accessed such support despite indicating mental health concerns.

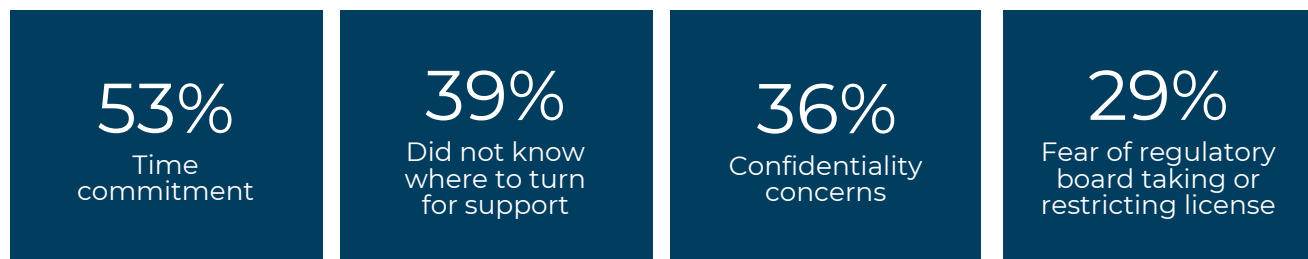
Survey data indicate that healthcare providers are exhausted both physically and mentally. They are stressed both at work and home. Survey respondents indicated an increase in depression and hopelessness during the pandemic as well as thoughts of suicide and concerns about substance use. Yet only 1 in 5 sought emotional or mental health support, and 81% of SMBO respondents said they did NOT receive any type of screening, assessment, or monitoring at work regarding the stressors they faced specifically due to the pandemic.



SMBO respondents were less likely than healthcare professionals licensed by other boards to seek emotional support.

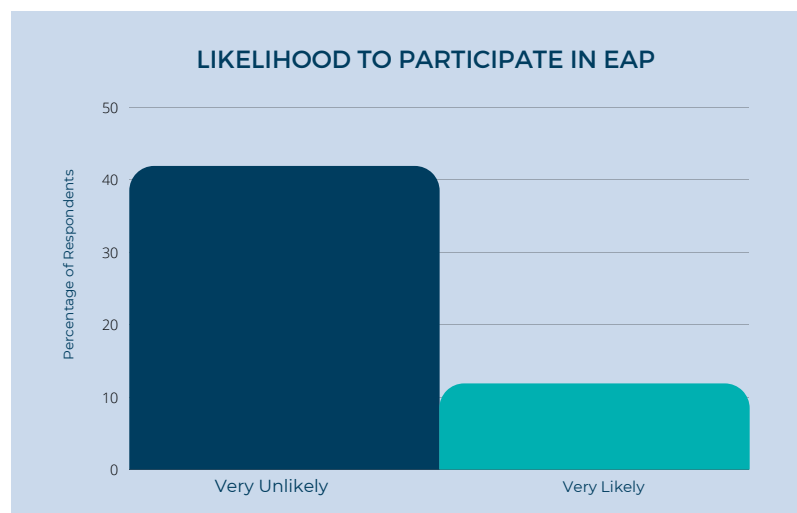
OBSTACLES TO SEEKING SUPPORT

Respondents who indicated that they did not seek emotional services during the pandemic were asked to identify obstacles to seeking assistance. Below are examples of obstacles identified.



LIKELIHOOD TO PARTICIPATE

Respondents were asked, “Does your workplace offer a program to address mental health concerns (e.g., Employee Assistance Program [EAP])?” More than half (52%) of respondents indicated that their workplace did offer a program, while 29% indicated their workplace did not.



IN CONCLUSION

As expected, overall well-being worsened during the pandemic. But data show that many healthcare professionals were already experiencing significant health and well-being challenges prior to the pandemic. We hope these findings can be used to find ways to support and improve the lives of healthcare professionals during both pandemic and non-pandemic times.

A COMPARISON OF PHYSICIANS TO RESIDENT PHYSICIANS

In a comparison of physicians with resident physicians, results showed statistically significant differences between the two.

While effect sizes were small, data suggests that resident physicians may be at increased risk for burnout and need additional training and support to prevent and remedy burnout, particularly under high stress conditions.

The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to analyze these results.

Resident Physicians were **more likely** to report feeling down, depressed or hopeless more often prior to the pandemic.

Resident Physicians were **more likely** to report having suicidal thoughts more often during the pandemic.

Resident Physicians were more likely to report:
*feeling emotionally drained more often,
not caring what happens to patients more often,
and accomplishing worthwhile things less often both prior to and during the pandemic.*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We must thank those who worked tirelessly on this project and afforded us the ability to collect and capture the stories of Ohio's healthcare workers.

OhioPHP's Board of Directors

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Without you, this would not be possible.

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OhioPHP

Supporting Ohio's Healthcare Professionals since 1995