

Rationale:

Burnout rates are rising and professional fulfillment is on the decline among healthcare providers, including those in training. The global pandemic has only exaggerated these trends. Training programs must think outside the box to support their learners in this evolving climate. If the stressors of their medical education are overly burdensome, learners will not have the bandwidth to ask questions, take risks and explore personal interests, all of which are necessary for their growth and professional fulfillment. We theorize that coaching can help combat burnout symptoms by re-aligning the actions of trainees with their values, practicing self-awareness to make deliberate choices and creating a structure to offer personal accountability for goal acquisition. We believe coaching can improve both burnout rates and professional fulfillment for fellows in PCCM.

Method:

UW Health providers participate in the Stanford's "Physician Wellness Survey" which has revealed residents and fellows report rates of burnout of 40% in 2017 and 43% in 2019, and increased to 48% in 2020. Similarly, professional fulfillment scores have decreased from 36% in 2019 to 32% in 2020. Even more dramatic was our PCCM Fellowship's program evaluation of burnout, with a self-reported 72% "yes" on burnout questioning in 2020, with 75% of trainees identifying the ICU as the main source of this burnout.

A 2019 JAMA article entitled "Effect of a Professional Coaching Intervention on the Well-being and Distress of Physicians, A Pilot Randomized Clinical Trial"(L.Dyrbye et al) evaluated practicing physicians from Internal Medicine, Pediatrics and Family Medicine in a coaching program. They reported that following three half hour coaching sessions over 6 months, the "coaching group" saw a 19.5% decrease in emotional exhaustion scores and a 17.1% decrease in burnout symptoms. The coaching group also showed a 20% increase in overall quality of life with a 4.2% increase in resilience scores. After our review of the coaching literature, we believe coaching can improve both burnout rates and professional fulfillment for fellows in Pulmonary and Critical Care.

Topics focusing on wellbeing and burnout were allocated to either coaching domains or mentorship domains, ensuring separation of these two distinct roles. It is important for mentors to function in an advisory capacity, modeling best practices in medicine, while coaches partner with each learner to explore opportunities for self-reflection. Our PCCM Fellowship program manager enrolled in the Professional Coach Certificate program offered by the University of Wisconsin. As a student in this program, she offers coaching sessions to residents and fellows as a pilot program. As our coach is a student in this certificate program, it was advised that the first 25 client hours be spent with learners who volunteer for participation, as they have a self-selected interest in this coaching program. Currently three PCCM fellows and five other learners from the Department of Medicine are participating. Each learner has agreed to 3-6 one hour long coaching sessions. Pre- and post-evaluation questions are being obtained from each client reflecting on self-assessments. Phase two of this program will include trainees who identify as having difficulty with self-reflection or are recommended for participation by their mentors or program directors.

Conclusion:

Burnout among fellows is at an all-time high. Decreasing professional fulfillment appears connected to high burnout rates as well. Fulfillment should motivate learners to explore personal interests and inspire professional growth. Individualized coaching supports trainees through practicing self-awareness in making more deliberate choices that align with their values, therefore improving their sense of professional fulfillment. The new insights resulting from this program are expected to demonstrate how

self-assessment is a tool that can improve professional fulfillment and reduce burnout symptoms during fellowship training.