

How physicians' attitudes on the healthcare industry differ by specialty

July 1, 2022



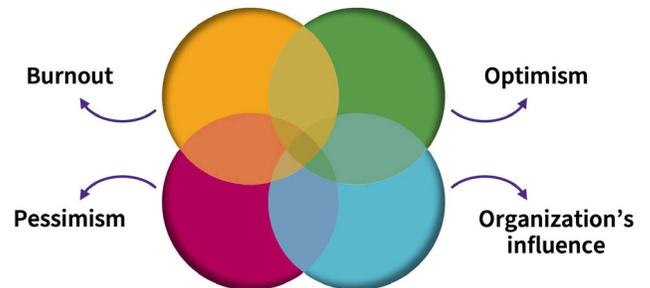
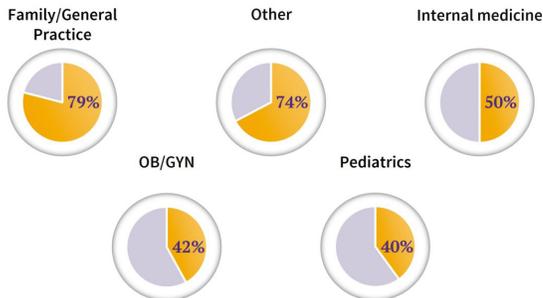
The following is based on athenahealth's Physician Sentiment Survey: a sample of 743 practicing physicians across specialties who completed an athenahealth survey conducted by Harris Poll in January 2022, in addition to 15 in-depth qualitative interviews with survey respondents.

Physicians are split into two categories when it comes to their opinions on the state of healthcare: those who report being optimistic about the future of medicine (healthcare optimists) and those who do not (healthcare pessimists).

While there is overlap between certain specialties, organizations, burnout rates, and attitudes, none of it is mutually exclusive.

Some specialties report higher optimism than others

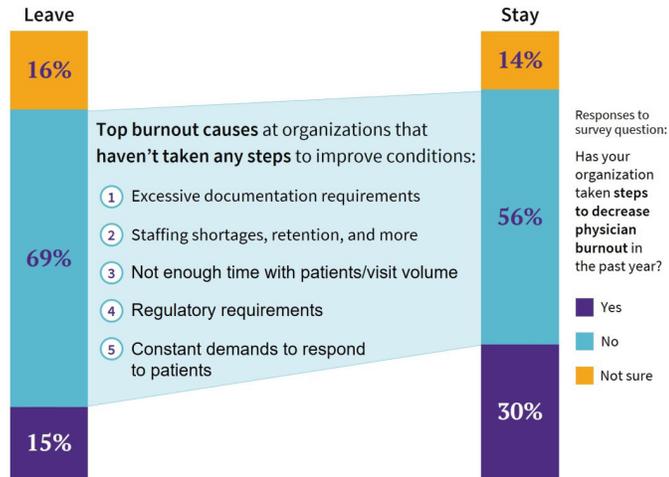
Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree with the statement "I am optimistic about the future of healthcare in the U.S." by specialty



What is driving physicians' perspectives? How will their outlooks impact the industry tomorrow?

Physicians' plans may reflect their optimism, and shine light on where organizations can improve

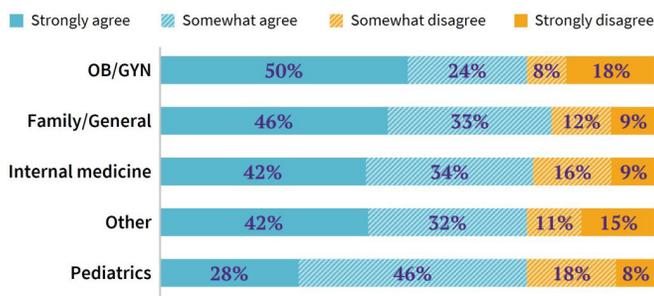
Physicians who anticipate that within three years from now they will either leave or stay with their current organization



With observationally collected data, it's hard to demonstrate a causal relationship between the experience of burnout, organizational factors, and individual physicians' outlook on the future of healthcare.

While physicians are more likely than not to stay with their current organizations, the certainty differs by specialty

Responses to "I am very likely to be working for my current organization 3 years from now"



Note: "Other" includes the following specialties as selected by survey respondents: Cardiology, Ophthalmology, Other, Psychiatry/Behavioral health.

Causal or not, we know these factors are related — further understanding how they are related, and in which direction, will be crucial in improving the working experience of all physicians.

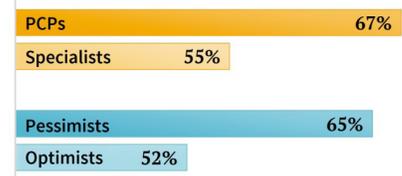
A solution? Better connectivity... starting with EHRs.

Physicians across the board have one thing in common: they all interact with one or more EHRs. While better connectivity isn't a cure-all for physician pessimism, take a look at what physicians report wanting from their EHRs. Do they believe change is possible?

1 Easier patient data sharing

Most physicians report regularly struggling to access their patients' data

Survey respondents who report feeling frustrated by the challenges of accessing their patients' clinical information on a weekly basis or more frequent



Improved data connectivity between systems is one of two top physician recommendations that would improve the quality of healthcare they can provide.

Physicians believe that improved data connectivity between information systems can be a win-win



2 Better data curation

Across healthcare optimists and pessimists, nine out of ten physicians agree that better data about their patients would give them more confidence in their ability to support patient needs.

More doesn't always mean better, especially when it comes to data



More data without better management risks increasing already high rates of information overload.

89% of physicians



agree more clinical data isn't always the answer, the **right clinical data at the right time** is most important.

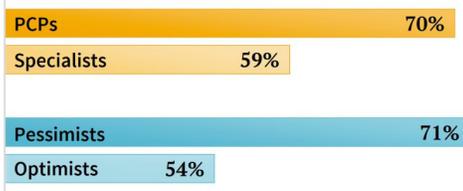
Physicians need better, simplified workflows that curate the most important information while helping them with documentation to meet quality, regulatory, and payer standards.

3 Organizational support

It isn't news that physicians are overwhelmed by excessive documentation and administrative requirements.

Most (90%) physicians believe that the burdens of regulatory requirements are getting worse

Survey respondents who report feeling overwhelmed by administrative requirements and burdens on a weekly basis or more frequently



What can improve these burnout rates? Our research revealed that when an organization doesn't take steps to reduce burnout, its physicians are more likely to cite bureaucratic tasks as a consistent cause of burnout. They're also nearly...

2X as likely

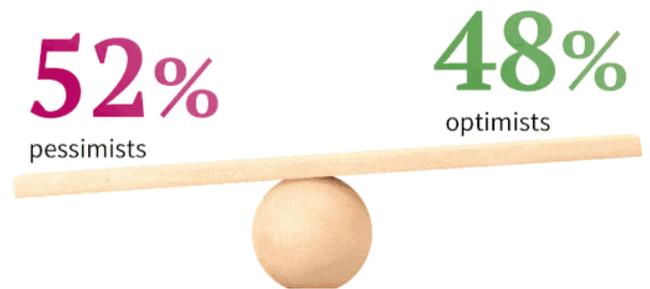
to cite **government regulations as a barrier** to improving connectivity of patient data **between EHR systems**



If organizations take steps to reduce the administrative burden caused by government regulations, data suggests they may modulate physician burnout levels. Where to start? Establishing better cross-EHR patient data connections.

Better connections may convert healthcare pessimists to healthcare optimists.

As a result of the myriad pressures on healthcare professionals, physicians are divided on where the industry is headed, with just over half (52%) saying they are pessimistic about the future of U.S. healthcare and only 48% expressing optimism.



Overall, physicians are optimistic that a wholly connected system will be achieved at some point during their careers, with 71% of younger physicians (age 50 or younger) having a brighter outlook than older physicians (age 50 or older).

Many (65%) physicians believe that a **wholly connected system** will be achieved at some point during their careers



If a wholly connected system is what brightens physicians' outlooks, it looks like we're beginning to tip the scale.