

5 QUESTIONS:

ON ADDRESSING WELLNESS THROUGH EQUITY & LEADERSHIP



The AHA's Physician Alliance frames all resources and services within three fundamental values: Lead Well. Be Well. Care Well. Through our "Five Questions" podcast, we regularly engage physician leaders on these three values.

A special series spotlights four female physicians participating in the Women's Wellness through Equity and Leadership (WEL) Grant program, supported by the AHA, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and American Psychological Association, to develop support strategies for female physicians to address burnout professionally and personally. To listen to these podcasts as well as others in the series, visit www.aha.org/physicians.



We underestimate the importance of sharing stories in medicine.

Heather Farley, M.D., MHCDs, FACEP – chief wellness officer, Christina Care – Wilmington, Del.

So many of us are experiencing the same challenges yet there's a barrier to acknowledging that. Personal stories allow us to normalize the very real burdens of caregiving. It's not that we're weak or can't hack it – we are experiencing a normal human reaction to a very abnormal state of circumstances, be that an adverse event or toxic work environment.



The culture of medicine has been slow to change how we value female physicians. We can change that.

Amy Ahasic, M.D. – critical care physician, section chief for pulmonary and critical care medicine, Norwalk Hospital – Norwalk, Conn.

There are still little things female physicians experience that male physicians don't. I haven't seen those incidents lessen over my career. Bigger, systemic issues – pay inequities for women in medicine, the number of women in senior academic positions – these directly impact wellness of female physicians and we need to be more aggressive in addressing them.



Fear isn't a strategy.

Janine L. Adjo, M.D., FAAP – vice chairman, Department of Pediatrics, SBH Health System – The Bronx, N.Y.

I see many women with a leadership opportunity let fear hold them back. They're afraid they will fail at something – not execute perfectly – and I want to do away with that. We all make mistakes and have failures, but we can learn from that and move on. In fact, you might improve the world because of that one failure.



I quickly saw that burnout and unrealistic expectations for myself and colleagues was going to be a real threat.

Dawn Sears, M.D. – chair, gastroenterology, Baylor Scott & White Health – Temple, Texas

If I could help a few colleagues stay in practice longer, I knew my impact on patients would be much greater than just treating the patient in front of me. With more women becoming physicians than before, what could I do to address sexual harassment and gender bias that denies women opportunities even though we have same education as our male counterparts? These questions have prompted my WEL project, a roadmap for creating a women in medicine support program.