3 KEYS TO RECAPTURE JOY AND PURPOSE IN MEDICINE

The AHA Physician Alliance regularly convenes senior physician executives as part of its Physician Leadership Circle for high-level conversations around issues facing physician leaders. The group recently discussed how physicians can return to purpose – more specifically, how health care delivery can not only address the epidemic of burnout but return the joy and purpose of medicine to our care teams. Below are highlights and for resources on the topic, visit www.aha.org/physician-alliance-be-well.

There’s no single pain point.
Burnout is not one thing. This is a complex issue that requires multiple solutions tailored to your local environment. It also requires listening and observing colleagues and teams to truly understand their frustrations and pain points. Especially for physicians, the lack of community paired with a lack of control over environment takes away joy in work. You can’t fix these deep culture problems with an off-the-shelf product.

Absence of burnout does not count as a win.
First, be sure the right thing is being measured – well-being should be the end goal. While our health care system will always have challenges, as leaders we must demonstrate actions we are taking to foster well-being and help physicians, nurses and others manage challenge and change.

Leadership matters.
It will take years, not months, to change the statistics from one in two physicians experiencing burnout. Such sustained effort can only happen with committed leaders and a coalition of stakeholders representing all aspects of an organization. Such change cannot be mandated, rather it must be shared change. Build infrastructure to support this work and be sure the entire leadership team understands addressing it is a strategic imperative.

Visit www.aha.org/physicians for more information, tools and resources from the AHA Physician Alliance.