



# Healthcare Workforce Stress, Burnout, and Resiliency

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**Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People**



# Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

## Overview



**TENS OF MILLIONS** of Americans receive quality, affordable health care and other services through HRSA's **90-PLUS PROGRAMS** and more than **3,000 GRANTEES**.



# Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

## Vision

Healthy Communities, Healthy People

## Mission

To improve health outcomes and achieve health equity through access to quality services, a skilled health workforce, and innovative, high-value programs.

## Goals

**Goal 1:** Take actionable steps to achieve health equity and improve public health

**Goal 2:** Improve access to quality health services

**Goal 3:** Foster a health workforce and health infrastructure able to address current and emerging needs

**Goal 4:** Optimize HRSA operations and strengthen program engagement



**Carole Johnson**  
**Administrator**



# HRSA IEA Core Functions

Serve as

## **Ambassador and Liaison**

HRSA IEA serves as a central point of contact and representative for HRSA, and facilitates connections to HRSA and federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and community partners.

Engage in

## **Strategic Collaboration and Consultation**

HRSA IEA creates and brokers relationships with and among partners to address needs, facilitate problem resolution, advance HRSA priorities, and leverage HRSA resources.

Provide

## **Outreach and Education**

HRSA IEA promotes public health and health equity by expanding knowledge about HRSA's programs, resources, priorities and related best practices.

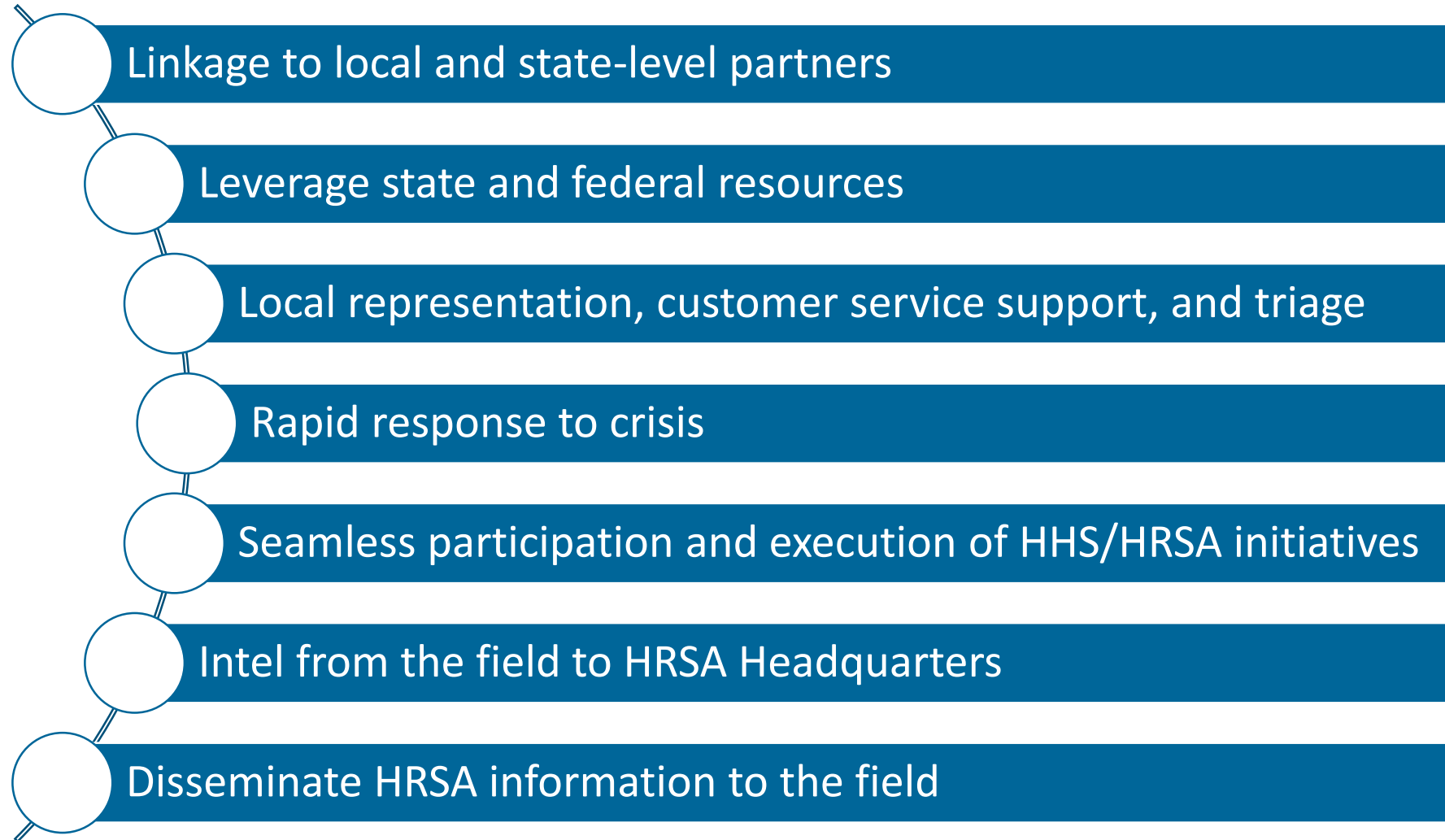
Respond to

## **Public Health Issues**

HRSA IEA identifies critical ground-level public health information about national, regional, state, local, territorial, and tribal trends to inform HRSA's operations, decision-making, and allocation of resources.



# Benefits of HRSA's Regional Presence





# HRSA – Healthcare Workforce

HRSA programs improve the health of underserved populations by:

- Strengthening the health workforce: Health professional training programs
- Connecting skilled professionals to communities in need through scholarship and loan repayment programs



Grants:

- Promoting Resilience and Mental Health Among Health Professional Workforce Program
- Health and Public Safety Workforce Resiliency Training Program
- Health and Public Safety Workforce Resiliency Technical Assistance Center



<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/funding/health-workforce-resiliency-awards>



**HRSA**  
Office of Intergovernmental  
and External Affairs

# My Background

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- Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- HRSA Region 8 Behavioral Health Liaison – 2006-Present
- Administration for Children and Families Region 8 Tribal State Child Welfare Program Specialist
- Clinical psychologist focused on trauma/PTSD. Outpatient, inpatient, and Veterans Administration settings



# Agenda

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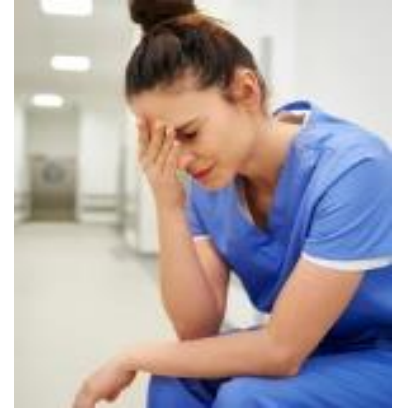
- Healthcare Worker Stress and Mental Health
- Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic
- Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Trauma
- Workforce Burnout





# Healthcare Worker Stress and Mental Health

- Work stress refers to the harmful physical and emotional effects when job requirements do not match workers' resources or needs. Work stress can lead to poor mental and physical health.
- Healthcare workers are more likely to experience mental health problems than some other professions. Work in healthcare often involves:
  - Intensely stressful and emotional situations in caring for those who are sick
  - Exposure to human suffering and death
  - Unique pressures from relationships with the patient, family members, and employers
  - Working conditions with ongoing risk for hazardous exposures, such as to COVID-19, other infectious diseases, hazardous drugs, etc.
  - Demanding physical work and risk of injuries, such as through patient handling
  - Long and often unpredictably scheduled hours of work. This is often related to as-needed scheduling, unexpected double shifts, and unpredictable intensity of on-call work.



# Healthcare Worker Stress and Mental Health

- Many healthcare workers place the **well-being of others before themselves**. Although this dedication to patients may seem admirable, it can ultimately be harmful if it delays or prevents workers from getting the help that they need for their own health and well-being.
- **Stigma** can contribute to behavioral health concerns among healthcare workers, since there is a strong, historical stigma related to healthcare workers seeking care for mental health or substance use disorders.



# Healthcare Workforce and the COVID-19 Pandemic

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- Staff upheaval:
  - Loss of staff – Staff becoming ill or leaving their jobs
  - Addition of new team members – Traveling nurses, locum tenens
- Using operating modes that decrease additional capacity and staff; Limited resources – Focus on the bottom line
- Stigma: Verbal abuse from patients
- Under stressful conditions, such as a pandemic, task vigilance can decline, one's focus gets narrowed, errors can creep in, and the coordination of patient care suffers.

# COVID-19 Pandemic

- **The pandemic** has introduced additional:
  - Fatigue, stress, insomnia, loss, depression, and grief for healthcare workers
  - Workforce shortages, lack of personal protective equipment, and increased workload with resulting heightened anxiety and risk of personal harm
  - Trauma (PTSD) symptoms
  - Residual symptoms due to infection with COVID-19
- Context of significant pre-existing workforce shortages and distribution issues, and pre-existing problems with staff burnout, stress, and mental health.
- After the pandemic, many effects the pandemic has had on the health care workforce will likely persist.



# Compassion Fatigue

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- The “cost of caring” for others
- A combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual depletion associated with caring for patients in significant emotional pain and physical distress
- Compassion fatigue has been defined as including two elements: Burnout and secondary traumatic stress
  - Burnout is physical and mental exhaustion leading to reduced ability to cope with your environment.
  - Secondary traumatic stress is the stress you may experience due to empathy with others you see going through trauma, including physical trauma such as serious injury, illness, or death. People also may experience secondary traumatic stress through empathy with others who talk with them about their traumas.





# Collective Trauma

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- Collective trauma is a psychological trauma experienced by a group of people of any size, up to and including an entire society in response to a mass traumatizing event, such as natural disasters and man-made disasters impacting collective identity
- Studies have shown that on a societal level, some of the potential lasting impacts on future generations include:
  - Increased individual and collective fear
  - Identity crisis
  - Increased feelings of vulnerability
- Unequal Impacts
  - Collective trauma is not always equal. Even within groups, people may be affected and bear the burden of trauma differently.



# Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Trauma, and Trauma

## ■ Vicarious Trauma

- Indirect experience of patient's trauma
- The profound shift in world view that occurs in helping professionals when they work with clients who have experienced trauma
- Negative changes in the clinician's view of self, others, and the world resulting from repeated empathic engagement with patients' trauma-related thoughts, memories, and emotions

## ■ Secondary Trauma

- Similar to vicarious trauma
- May exhibit symptoms similar to PTSD

## ■ Trauma/PTSD

- Experience of trauma directly
- Trauma symptoms



# Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma

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## Signs of Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma

- Difficulty concentrating
- Intrusive imagery
- Feeling discouraged about the world
- Hopelessness
- Exhaustion and irritability
- High attrition (helpers leaving the field)
- Negative outcomes (dispirited, cynical workers remaining in the field; boundary violations)



# Workforce Burnout

- Burnout is a psychological syndrome described as a self-reported state of work-related or care-related physical and mental stress.
- Burnout is an occupational phenomenon and not a medical condition.

## Risk Factors

- Heavy workload; long hours
- Lack of self-efficacy
- Lack of control
- Poor external rewards
- Toxic institutionally-related stress
- Work-life imbalance



# Workforce Burnout

## Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Excessive Stress
- Irritability, anger, impatience
- Fatigue
- Insomnia, change in sleep habits
- Poor decision-making
- Shortened attention span/difficulty concentrating
- Lack of motivation
- Negative or cynical outlook
- Physical symptoms – low energy, headaches, GI
- Alcohol or substance misuse, or use of food, etc. to “numb out”
- Lacking in satisfaction from job/achievements





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# Webinar Presenters





**Wendy Dean, MD**  
**CEO/Co-founder**  
**Moral Injury of Healthcare**



**CDR Sharyl Trail, PsyD**  
**Deputy Regional Administrator, - Region 6 Dallas**  
**Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs - HRSA**



**Paul Barach, B.Med.Sci, MD, MPH, Maj (RET.)**  
**College of Population Health, Thomas Jefferson University School of Medicine, PA**  
**Sigmund Freud University School of Medicine, Vienna, Austria**



# Contact Information

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