# Healthcare Workforce Stress and Resiliency:
# The Role of Technology

*September 13, 2022*

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Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People

# HRSA Telehealth Learning Series

The objective of the HRSA Telehealth Learning Series is to highlight successful projects/best practices as well as resources to promote and further the use of telehealth technologies for healthcare delivery, education, and health information services.

Today's webinar is hosted by:
- HRSA's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs
- HRSA's Office for the Advancement of Telehealth
- Southwest Telehealth Resource Center

# Webinar Tips, Notes, and Technical Support

- When you joined the webinar your phone &/or computer microphone was muted
- The webinar is being recorded
- Recordings will be posted on the Arizona Telemedicine Program website
  - http://telemedicine.arizona.edu/webinars/previous

- Webinar Technical Support Resources
  - Use Chat to contact the Webinar Host
  - Email atpwebinar@telemedicine.arizona.edu

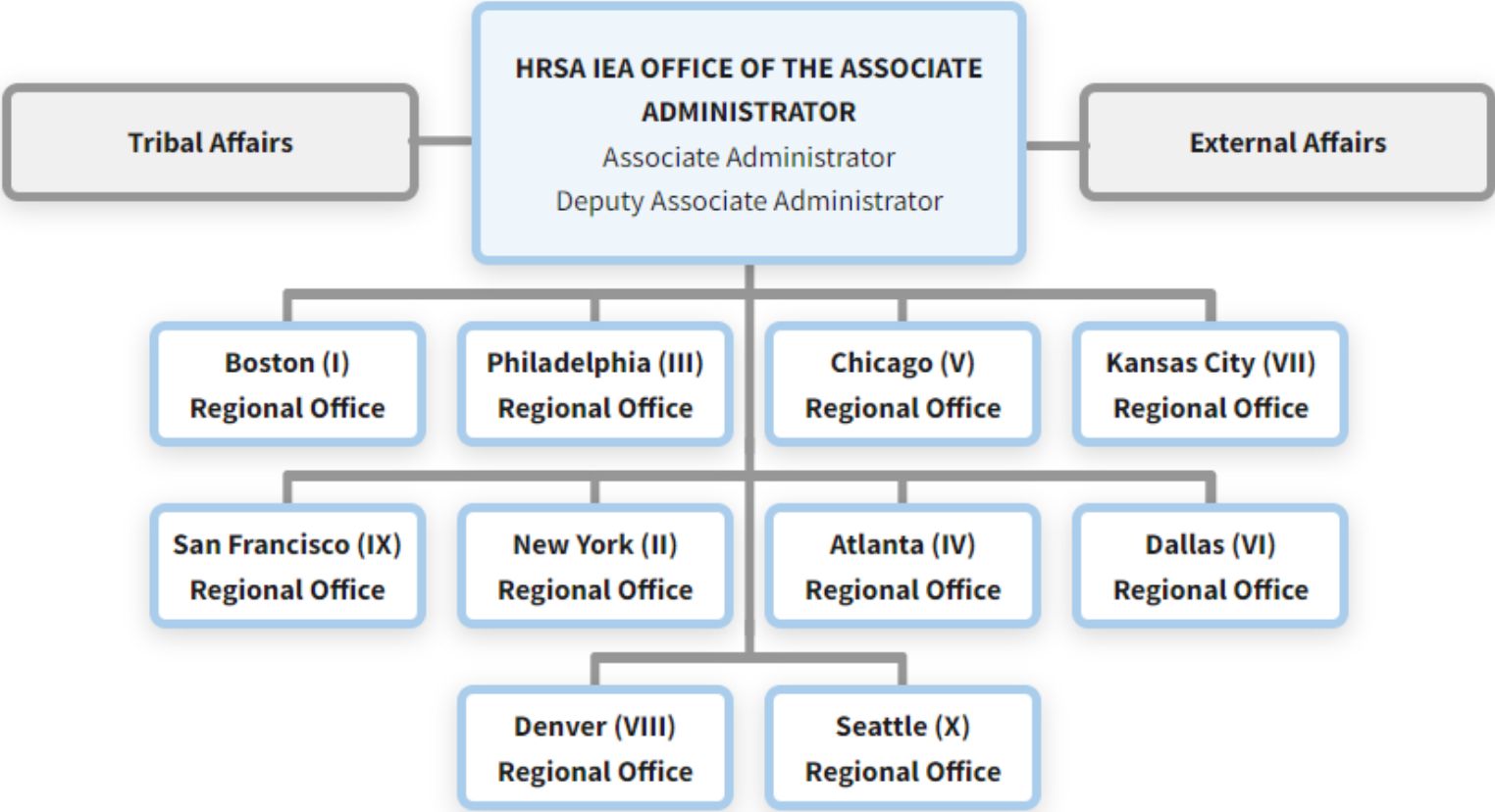# Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
## Overview
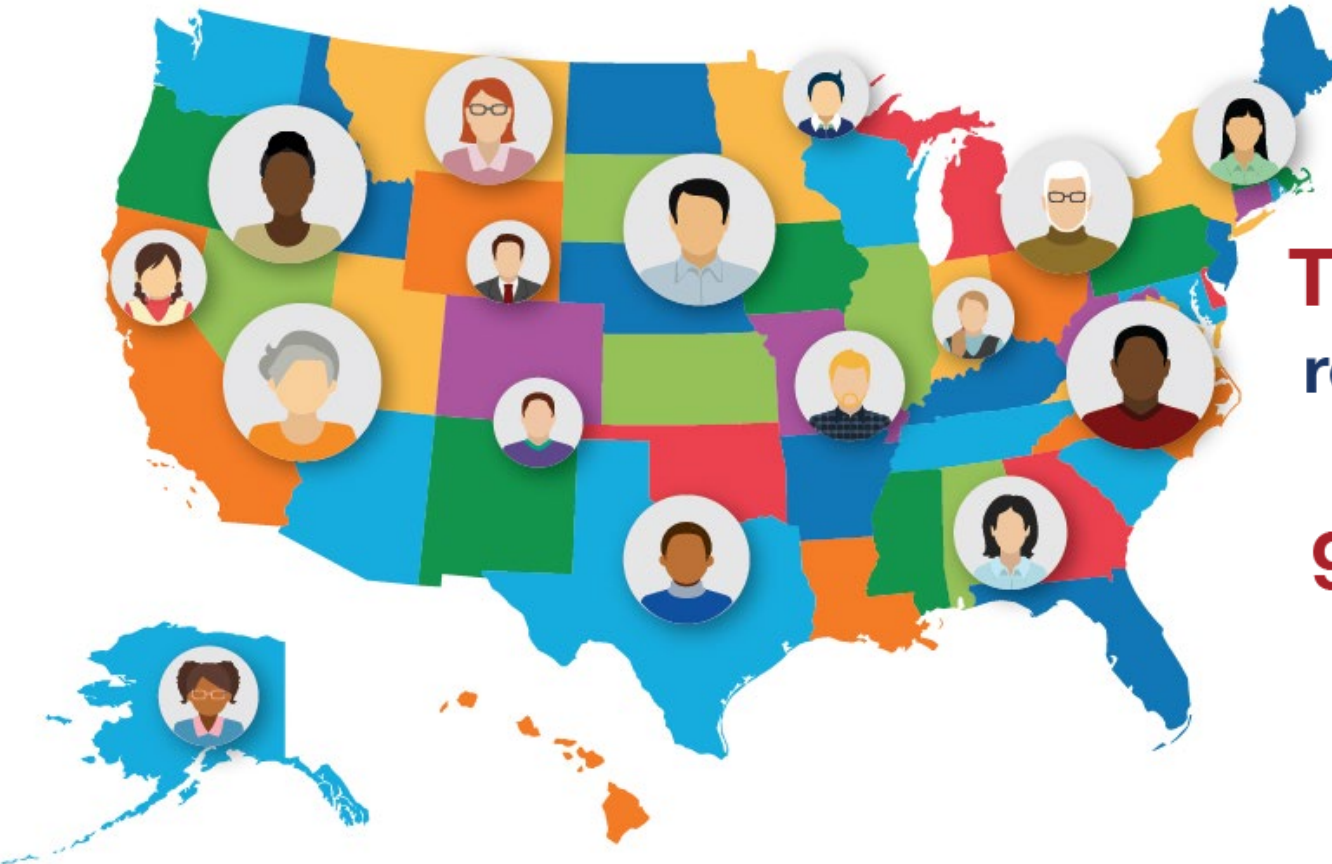


**TENS OF MILLIONS** of Americans receive quality, affordable health care and other services through HRSA's **90-PLUS PROGRAMS** and more than **3,000 GRANTEES.**

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The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is one of 11 agencies under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HRSA is the primary federal agency responsible for improving health outcomes and achieving health equity through access to quality services, a skilled health workforce, and innovative programs. HRSA's programs provide health care to people who are geographically isolated and economically or medically vulnerable.

The HRSA Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (HRSA IEA) serves as the principal agency lead on intergovernmental and external affairs, regional operations, and tribal partnerships. HRSA IEA provides direct outreach to increase the awareness, reach, and impact of HRSA programs through its 10 regional offices, sub-office in Puerto Rico, and headquarters in Rockville, MD.

Fact Sheet:
https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/organization/bureaus/iea/hrsa-iea-fact-sheet.pdf

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# HRSA – Health Workforce

HRSA programs improve the health of underserved populations by:

- <u>Strengthening the health workforce</u>: Health professional training programs
- <u>Connecting skilled professionals to communities in need</u> 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
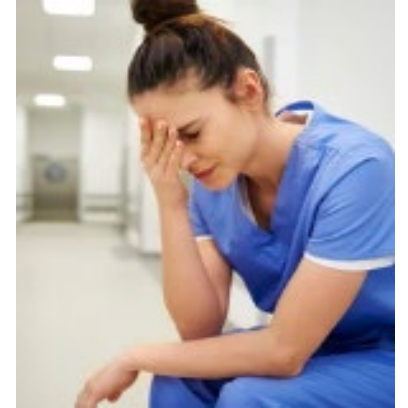
# Healthcare Worker Stress and Mental Health

- 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 behavioral 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
  - 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 unpredictable hours



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# Healthcare Worker Stress and Mental Health

- Many healthcare workers place the **well-being of others before themselves**. This can 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 issues among healthcare workers as there is deep-rooted, historical stigma related to healthcare workers seeking care for mental health or substance use disorders.

# Healthcare Workforce and the COVID-19 Pandemic

- **The pandemic** has introduced additional:
  - Fatigue, stress, and grief for healthcare workers
  - Workforce shortages, lack of PPE, and increased workload
  - Residual symptoms due to infection with COVID-19
  - Trauma (PTSD) symptoms
- Staff upheaval
- Using operating modes that decrease additional capacity and staff; limited resources and focus on the bottom line
- Stigma: Verbal abuse from patients

# Compassion Fatigue and Trauma

- Compassion Fatigue
  - 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
- Vicarious Trauma
  - Indirect experience of patient's 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

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, gastrointestinal
- Alcohol or substance misuse, or use of food, etc. to "numb out"
- Lacking in satisfaction from job/achievements

# Resiliency

- Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.

- Resilience is the intrinsic ability of a system to adjust its functioning prior to, during, or following changes and disturbances so that it can sustain required operations, even after a major mishap or in the presence of continuous stress.

- Building/enhancing resiliency – individuals, teams, organizations

- As much as resilience involves "bouncing back" from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.

# Recommendations

- Focus on successes and acknowledge wins
- Pre-briefings and debriefings - Common understanding of healthcare teams' scope and roles of its team members.
- Psychological safety, trust, communication, helping one another
- Support healthcare professionals with temporary housing, feed workers on long shifts, meditation rooms

# Technology & Healthcare Workforce Stress, Burnout, and Resiliency

- Technology – A tool to address healthcare worker stress and burnout, and promote resiliency
- Panel – Three perspectives
- Discussion/Q&A session

# Resources

- **Telehealth.HHS.gov:** https://telehealth.hhs.gov/
- **Telehealth Resource Centers:** https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/
- **Addressing Health Worker Burnout: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Thriving Health Workforce:** Addressing Health Worker Burnout (hhs.gov)
- **Tips for Healthcare Professionals: Coping With Stress and Compassion Fatigue (SAMHSA):** https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Tips-for-Healthcare-Professionals-Coping-with-Stress-and-Compassion-Fatigue/PEP20-01-01-016
- **Support for Public Health Workers and Health Professionals (CDC):** https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/healthcare-workers-first-responders/

# Resources

- **Healthcare Workers: Work Stress & Mental Health:** https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/healthcare/workstress.html
- **Sustaining the Well-Being of Healthcare Personnel during Coronavirus and other Infectious Disease Outbreaks (Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress):** https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents/CSTS_FS_Sustaining_Well_Being_Healthcare_Personnel_during_Infectious_Disease_Outbreaks.pdf
- **Indian Health Service Telehealth Website:** Telehealth | Indian Health Service (IHS)
- **Provider Resilience App (Department of Defense):** https://health.mil/News/Articles/2021/09/30/DHAs-Mobile-Apps-Can-Help-You-with-Overall-Wellness
- **Institute for Healthcare Improvement – Joy in Work initiative** https://www.ihi.org/Topics/Joy-In-Work/Pages/default.aspx

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