Critical Conversations: Challenges to Clinician Well-being and Resilience in Hospice and Palliative Care (SA510)

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Objectives

- Express one’s own personal experience of distress or suffering related to working in hospice and palliative care.
- Describe the impact of work-related distress or suffering on well-being, quality of care, and workforce sustainability.
- Discuss the complex interplay of personal, team, organizational, and systemic factors that put clinicians at risk for distress and burnout.
- Identify three national initiatives that provide resources to support the well-being of health professionals.

Hospice and palliative care clinicians often find meaning and satisfaction in their work with seriously ill patients, but they may also experience work-related distress. Clinician suffering arises from a complex interplay of personal, team-level, organizational, and systemic determinants and manifests as burnout, moral distress, compassion fatigue and other syndromes. Distress is amplified when clinicians feel isolated, stigmatized or discouraged from asking for help. Burnout impacts patient safety and quality of care and often results in clinicians leaving their positions or pursuing alternative careers. Clinician turnover is costly for organizations, and workforce shortages are magnified when experienced clinicians reduce their hours or retire early. Although there are strategies to promote clinician resilience, external factors, such as workflow and organizational culture, may impede these interventions. Recognition of the unacceptable consequences of rising burnout rates across all health specialties and clinical disciplines has sparked the emergence of national initiatives to increase clinician well-being.

In this special session moderated by an expert in palliative care social work, a panel of leaders from AAHPM, HPNA, and NHPCO will discuss how their organizations are participating in national initiatives and providing resources to prevent clinician distress and maximize joy in practice. Using a town hall format, attendees will be invited to pose questions and share comments to:

- Illuminate the causes and effects of distress and suffering experienced by hospice and palliative care clinicians,
- Identify individual, team, organization and system level strategies to reduce distress and suffering, and
- Explore how organizations have collaborated with others to develop solutions that enhance joy in the workplace.