



STATE OF MIND: MISSOURI MEDICAL SCHOOLS COLLABORATE ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



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Background
Medical student mental health, suicide, burnout awareness and prevention, as well as resilience and wellness continue to be topics of concern and interest among medical schools. Exploring ways to bring resources to students in order to assess and alleviate these issues are becoming a priority among schools. Since 2015, the medical and osteopathic schools in Missouri have convened annually with a focused agenda for discussions regarding mental health and student wellness. Topics discussed include resources; curricular design and mental health; wellness programs and prevention; mindfulness and resilience; stigma and Missouri legislation regarding mental health issues related to students. These annual meetings have provided a collaborative forum for our institutions. Of utmost concern is the stigma that mental health labels carry especially in the medical education and health care community.

The statistics on the negative effects of medical training on student well-being are alarming.

- 27.2% have depression or depressive symptoms.¹
- 11.1% have suicidal ideation.¹
- Rates psychological distress, anxiety and burnout are high.^{2,3,4}

The LCME medical school requirements to have programs that promote student well-being and facilitate adjustment to the physical and emotional demands of medical education.⁵

Medical school initiatives to improve student mental health have included education about mental health, wellness and access to care, stigma reduction, wellness programming and curricular changes.^{6,7}

Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Day designated by Missouri Senate Bill 52 designed to raise awareness of mental health, risk depression and suicide faced by medical school students. The bill also promotes research on the topic to find ways to improve well-being and save lives.^{8,9}

**Orientation
Early
Exposure**

Provide information of resources and services available, introducing importance of self-care among physicians in training, introduction of school's wellness programming

**Across the
Continuum**

Wellness events and activities; lectures and workshops on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, nutrition and fitness; themed wellness week promoting health and wellness

**Programing
with Student
Involvement**

All schools have Wellness Committees with student representation to ensure learner population has a voice as well as faculty and administration support

**Wellness
"Baked-In"**

Other ways schools work student wellness into the every-day learning environment - Pass/Fail grading years 1 and 2, dedicated study space, academic accommodations as needed and/or requested, mistreatment reporting protocols

Assessment

AAMC questionnaires (MSQ, Y2Q, GQ), Maslach Burnout Inventory, internal surveys, highlighting the importance of tracking progress and schools' awareness of programing, resources and student wellness

Benefits of Annual Meetings

- Provides discussion, exchange of ideas and resources on mental health and wellness initiatives conducted at each school
- Enhances professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals and mental health counselors in a cost effective, one day, convenient drive-in meeting format
- Expands collaboration and collegiality amongst the medical and osteopathic schools on joint projects, research and activities as related to mental health and wellness
- Creates an atmosphere of reducing the stigma of mental health issues, prioritizes mental health prevention and awareness among the schools and state officials
- Allows the group to be a collective voice to Missouri state governmental officials advocating on the issues relating to mental health for medical students

Next Steps

- Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Day on the third Monday in September beginning in 2018
- Ensure the State of Missouri is kept aware of all school activities through work with the Missouri Department of Mental Health
- Ongoing communication of all Missouri Medical Schools through email listserve
- Bi-annual meetings of the Medical Schools

References
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