

BURDA ON HEALTHCARE

10 Things Doctors Think

By David Burda

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I'm not a doctor, and I don't even play one on TV. But I am interested in what doctors think because as doctors go, so goes the healthcare system in the U.S. I've said this many times before. The system isn't going anywhere unless it gets doctors on board — or at least out of the way.

Here are 10 things doctors think based on five new reports, research and surveys. If anything, they make good data points for PowerPoint presentations.

51% of doctors say they believe healthcare access is a top social issue

That's according to a new Medscape report: [Physicians Rate Healthcare Access: Ongoing Problem for Patients](#). The report is based on a Medscape survey of 2,340 physicians in 29 medical specialties.

21% of doctors say they believe a single-payer system that guarantees healthcare access for all is the best healthcare system for the U.S.

That's according to the same Medscape report and survey. In other words, one out of every five physicians you know thinks that we should have the same type of healthcare system as they do in Canada and the United Kingdom.



38.8% of hospitalists are satisfied with their EHR systems

That's according to a KLAS Research report: [Exploring EHR Satisfaction by Provider Specialty](#). The report is based on a survey of physicians in 26 medical specialties with a minimum of 1,000 survey respondents per specialty. Hospitalists were the most satisfied with their EHR systems of any medical specialty.

8.4% of ophthalmologists are satisfied with their EHR systems

Ophthalmologists are the least satisfied with their EHR systems of any medical specialty included in the KLAS Research report. Makes you wonder if promises of a new or better EHR system is one reason that so many ophthalmology practices are selling out to private equity firms.

62.8% of doctors say they experienced at least one burnout symptom in 2021

That's according to a study published in *Mayo Clinical Proceedings: Changes in Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Integration in Physicians Over the First 2 Years of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The report is based on a survey of 2,440 physicians. Mayo Researchers defined burnout as experiencing emotional exhaustion and/or depersonalization. That's up from 38.2% of physicians in 2020.

57.1% of doctors say they would choose to become a physician again

That's according to the same study in *Mayo Clinical Proceedings*. That's down from 72.2% in 2020. That big drop in career satisfaction doesn't bode well for the adequacy of the physician labor force in the future. Think early retirement, career changes and discouraging others from going into medicine.



21% of doctors say they consume alcohol or controlled substances multiple times per day

That's according to a report from All Points North: *2022 State of Mental Health: American Healthcare Workers*. The report is based on a survey of 1,000 healthcare workers aged 22 or older. All Points North is a "whole-person health" management company based in Edwards, Colo., so take the survey results at face value.

14% of doctors say they consume alcohol or controlled substances at work

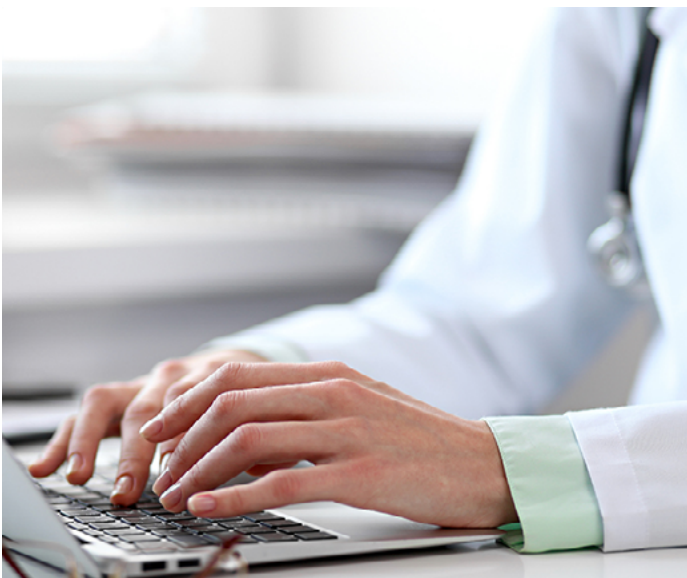
That would mean one in seven physicians you come in contact with during an episode of care is not sober. Frankly, that seems a little high to me. But even if the percentage is half that, it's still pretty scary from a patient-safety point of view.

68% of doctors say they now give their patients access to their own clinical data

That's according to a report from the American Medical Association: *Physicians' Motivations and Key Requirements for Adopting Digital Health Adoption and Attitudinal Shifts from 2016 to 2022*. The report is based on a survey of 1,300 physician respondents, evenly split between primary-care physicians and medical specialists.

44% of doctors say the use of digital health technologies gives them a "definite" advantage in their ability to provide patient care

That's according to the same AMA survey. That figure is up from 31% six years earlier in 2016, when the AMA conducted a similar survey. The change shows that more physicians are seeing the value in digital health tools that improve their ability to optimize care for their patients. That's an important lesson for digital health innovators, start-ups, entrepreneurs and investors.



When you add all these numbers and percentages up, what does it mean? I think they mean that most doctors are struggling with how the healthcare system is changing and lessening their authority, control and independence and handing it over to computers, corporations and consumers. It's similar to what happened to the journalism profession.

All I can say is, it was a good run.

If you'd like to learn more about what doctors think and where the medical profession is going, please check out "Past, Present and Future: Where Are Doctors Headed?" on 4sighthealth.com.

Thanks for reading.



AUTHOR



Dave Burda began covering healthcare in 1983 and hasn't stopped since. Dave writes this monthly column "Burda on Healthcare," contributes weekly blog posts, manages our weekly newsletter 4sight Friday, and hosts our weekly Roundup podcast. Dave believes that healthcare is a business like any other business, and customers—patients—are king. If you do what's right for patients, good business results will follow.

Dave's personnel experiences with the healthcare system both as a patient and family caregiver have shaped his point of view. It's also been shaped by covering the industry for 35 years as a reporter and editor. He worked at Modern Healthcare for 25 years, the last 11 as editor.

Prior to Modern Healthcare, he did stints at the American Medical Record Association (now AHIMA) and the American Hospital Association. After Modern Healthcare, he wrote a monthly column for Twin Cities Business explaining healthcare trends to a business audience, and he developed and executed content marketing plans for leading healthcare corporations as the editorial director for healthcare strategies at MSP Communications.

When he's not reading and writing about healthcare, Dave spends his time riding the trails of DuPage County, IL, on his bike, tending his vegetable garden and daydreaming about being a lobster fisherman in Maine. He lives in Wheaton, IL, with his lovely wife of 35 years and his three children, none of whom want to be journalists or lobster fishermen.

Visit 4sight.com/insights to read more from Dave Burda.