

# BurnOn: addressing medical student burnout through collaborative technology

**Madison Paul<sup>a</sup>, Andrew Obritsch<sup>b</sup>, Sejal Shah<sup>c</sup>, Gina Calco<sup>d</sup>, Richard Andresen<sup>e</sup>, Christopher Thomas<sup>e</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>Emory School of Medicine, <sup>b</sup>University of North Dakota School of Medicine, <sup>c</sup>Penn State College of Medicine,

<sup>d</sup>Oregon Health & Science University, <sup>e</sup>Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University



# Problem

Up to 50% of medical students experience burnout prior to residency. They are twice as likely to suffer from Alcohol Use Disorder, 13.6% meet criteria for Major Depressive Disorder, and 6.6% will experience suicidal ideation. Studies have shown a strong correlation between burnout and loneliness.

# Solution

Our solution is to create a smartphone app called “BurnOn.” This app will be a national digital community that students can access on the go to normalize talking about burnout, while maintaining a safe, anonymous community free of judgement. Students from medical schools across the country will be able to seek out guidance and support. Through secure chatrooms, students can reach out to professional counselors, as well as physicians and current medical students. These volunteers will be matched based on student request and the volunteer’s previous experience and will be approved by their respective academic institution. The app will offer numerous resources such as the AMA’s STEPSforward physician wellness modules, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and success stories on medical student burnout. A list of local counseling services and contact numbers for crisis hotlines will also be available.

# Implementation

The BurnOn app will allow students to remain anonymous as long as they wish. Students will complete a short survey on burnout when creating an account. They will then be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of BurnOn via these anonymous surveys. This will allow the tracking of the impact and progress by comparing self-identified burnout rates before and after the use of BurnOn.

# Impact

The ultimate goal of BurnOn is to reduce the negative impact of burnout in medical professionals. We hope to create a safe and anonymous forum for medical students to reach out to counselors, faculty, and peers for support. It is our hope that this be a non-intimidating first step in asking for help, with the intent to normalize seeking care. With physician suicide rates as high as 400 per year, it is vital that we work now to address burnout before medical students begin their professional careers. BurnOn's implication transcends medical professionals, improving the health of the future physician workforce. This improvement would trickle down to positively impact the physician-patient relationship.