Health Workers Are Suffering Critically High Levels of Burnout and Depression

Dr. Lorna Breen, Dr. Matt Gall, Dr. Mo Brown, and Dr. Scott Jolley are four of the hundreds of physicians who die by suicide every year. Like Lorna, Matt, Mo, and Scott, physicians and all health workers suffer from a critically high degree of burnout and stress. The rate of burnout among health workers continues to rise along with their rates of depression and other mental health conditions. The suicide rate among physicians and nurses is also twice that of the general population.

To avoid professional repercussions, overly stressed and burnt-out health workers often feel trapped taking care of patients with little to no relief. It is not surprising that the quality of patient care suffers in parallel.

Without immediate action, the added stress they continue to experience will put more pressure on our caregivers, resulting in more loss of life and a further decline in patient care.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE AT drlornabreen.org/burnout
The Law: A Needed First Step

The Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act is a landmark, first-of-its-kind legislation supporting health workers’ mental health and well-being. Since passage in 2022, the Lorna Breen Act has funded $103 million across 44 organizations to implement evidence-informed strategies that reduce and prevent suicide, burnout, mental health conditions, and substance use disorders. It has also established the Impact Wellbeing™ campaign, which gives hospital leaders evidence-informed solutions to reduce health worker burnout, sustain well-being, and build a system where health workers thrive.

But this is only scratching the surface of caring for our caregivers — less than 1% of the 6,120 hospitals in our country received grants, and it doesn’t consider the 200,000+ other types of healthcare settings. In addition to widening its reach to more hospitals, the reauthorization of the Lorna Breen Act also renews focus on reducing administrative burden for health workers everywhere.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LAW AT drlornabreen.org/about-the-legislation

Lorna Breen Act Grantee Spotlights

Watch grantees discuss their solutions at bit.ly/LBSpotlights

Bryan Sexton, PhD, Duke University
Carlton Abner, DNP, RN-BC, Kansas City University
Adrienne Martinez-Hollingsworth, PhD, MSN, RN, PHN, Duke University
Amy B. Locke, MD, FAAFP, University of Utah Health

WE MUST DO MORE

The pressures on health workers over the past few years finally shined a bright light on the immense strain they face – but this strain is deeply rooted in how our healthcare system operates. We must do more for those working tirelessly to save lives, often at great personal risk.

We must reauthorize and increase funding for the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (HR 7153/S 3679).

The Act is a lifeline for health workers, offering support and resources to address the mental health challenges they face. This critical legislation is not just a matter of policy; it’s a critical piece of the health delivery supply chain that benefits not only health workers, but every patient, every caregiver, every person that will require medical care in their lifetime.

It’s time to act, for their sake and for the future of healthcare in our country.