



Healthcare Tech Roundtable Report

Rethink workplace experiences to help reduce clinician burnout

Healthcare tech leaders explore the current state of clinician burnout in a roundtable discussion hosted by Avanade.

Clinician burnout heats up – and what to do about it

Sure, the pandemic exacerbated trends toward clinical burnout. But as the pandemic recedes, don't expect burnout to recede as well. New and continuing pressures – such as competition from retail clinics and continued industry consolidation – will ensure that clinicians continue to feel the heat.

[Avanade](#) hosted a roundtable discussion with members of [The College of Healthcare Information Management Executives](#) (CHIME). Joining the discussion, a panel of top healthcare tech executives discussed the use of technology to respond to this continuing trend.

This special report highlights key takeaways from the webinar. Using technology to enhance the workplace experience (WX) is key – but so is doing it right. The key takeaways:

1. The smallest things can have the biggest impact
2. Robotics process automation is the right Rx for you now
3. Clinicians live with the impact – and hold the key to the solution
4. Clinical use of cloud with AI brings new ethical considerations

60% to 75% of clinicians are burnt out: exhausted, depressed, or unable to sleep, according to [US News & World Report](#). 20% of clinicians quit during the pandemic and 80% of those who remain feel the added stress of staff shortages.

Roundtable panel

Lisa Grisim, RN, MSN, CHCIO
VP & Associate CIO
Stanford Children's Health

Teresa Sacchetta, MD, MBA, PhD
Board Member
Glucogear

Albert Villarin, MD, FACEP
VP & Chief Medical Informatics Officer
Nuvance Health

Moderator

Vaibhav Joshi, MD, MBA, CISSP, FFCI
Digital Advisory
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4 key takeaways

Takeaway #1: The smallest things can have the biggest impact

Improving the workplace experience (EX) for doctors, nurses and other clinicians means addressing one of the chief contributors to burnout: too little time for too many tasks. Technology meant to improve the problem can exacerbate it if it gives clinicians additional disconnected systems, more clicks and screens with which they must take time to interact.

The problem is large, but the solution doesn't need to be. Both clinicians and patients now understand the virtues of virtual visits and web conferencing – but the frustration factor can go through the roof when participants are dropped, video freezes, or audio gets garbled. Boosting bandwidth and redundancies might not sound sexy, but it may be just what the doctor ordered.

Similarly, ensuring printers work, refreshing personal computers, speeding log in times, updating user interfaces to complete tasks in fewer clicks, and enabling clinicians to access capabilities from within their EMRs rather than toggling between apps – all these maybe considered small things but too often they seem to be overlooked in design and can have big impacts on clinical staff.

Stanford Children's Health

Stanford Children's Health in California, created a "Home for Dinner" program. This idea, shared during the roundtable, aims to do just that for clinicians – get them out of the building and on their ways home by removing the pressure to linger to complete administrative work.

Tech staff work directly with physicians to observe the ways they work and use technology and propose alternatives to boost efficiency for each physician. For example, tech advisors show physicians how to optimize their email inboxes and delegate messages to which support staff can respond for them.

Takeaway #2: Robotic process automation is the right Rx for you now

Starting to improve EX with small steps can deliver quick results that boost morale and put momentum behind your efforts, but they'll only get you so far. Certainly, new technologies have matured sufficiently to be added to your toolbox of solutions. Chief among them: robotic process automation (RPA).

Medical centers and hospitals can find it helpful to first introduce RPA on the business or administrative side if they haven't already done so. Return on investment (ROI) is more easily quantified in business uses, proving the value of the concept and building support for adoption on the clinical side. Automating clinician interaction with computer systems – in onboarding, training, and resource authorization, for example – is a good place to start.

And be aware from the start that clinical RPA has a key requirement that many business-side applications don't: protecting patient confidentiality, safety and outcomes.

"We started our clinical use of RPA a year ago and we're finding it very helpful for our clinical staff, particularly when it comes to interacting with the EMR. Anything that reduces the time that physicians have to spend accessing the charts will reduce their stress."

Albert Villarin, MD, FACEP


VP & Chief Medical Informatics Officer
Nuvance Health

Takeaway #3: Clinicians live with the impact – and hold the key to the solution

In planning and adopting technology solutions to improve clinicians' workplace experience, it's easy to think that the experts are the ones who understand the technology. They are – but they have only half of the expertise you need. The other half lies with the clinicians themselves, who are the experts when it comes to what's contributing to their burnout and whether proposed solutions would help or hurt.

That means clinicians need to be part of this discussion from the beginning. Hear their ideas for improvement before you've developed preferred proposals of your own. Bringing them into the process late – say, after the organization has committed to a solution – can mean poor uptake of good solutions and even implementation of counterproductive ones.

Clinicians need to be part of multidisciplinary teams including technology personnel and data scientists. Be aware of the different perspectives these groups bring to the discussion and don't let those differences harden into obstacles to collaboration. Look for ways to highlight common needs and goals and the factors that unite all participants.



"There must be a culture change. We should begin by giving light to the problem, listening actively to clinicians in order to truly understand the problems they are facing. Clinicians need to be part of the decision-making team for solutions that will affect them. They must be included as team members, to have an active role in the solutions."

Teresa Sacchetta, MD, MBA, PhD

Board Member
GlucoGear

Takeaway #4: Clinical use of cloud with AI brings new challenges

The use of cloud with artificial intelligence (AI) to diagnose and treat disease can make those processes faster and more accurate – and provide a crucial new support for overworked clinicians. Clinical use of cloud with AI is an idea whose time has come. That's because providers have more individual patient and population data to work with than ever before, and virtually unlimited storage and computing capabilities in the cloud with which to analyze that data.

But, as they say, with great power comes great responsibility. Organizations need to ensure the safety and privacy of that data; an increasing challenge in a world in which institutions are interconnected and more clinicians work remotely and access information over the Internet – creating more data access points for potential compromise.

Beyond protecting their data, organizations need to consider the ethical implications of how they analyze it. The assumptions built into algorithms can inadvertently undercount already underserved populations, fail to account for socio-economic factors that affect health, or otherwise create ethical problems. It's essential to audit AI development and use for potential ethical breaches.

"AI is such a powerful tool in clinical settings that we must be extremely thoughtful about how we use it, and where it can have the greatest impact on outcomes and safety for all patients."

Lisa Grisim, RN, MSN, CHCIO

VP & Associate CIO
Stanford Children's Health

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Avanade is leading the continued evolution of Care 24/7 with additional Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare functionality, such as Home Health, to create a value-driven road map for our clients.



Rethink workplace experiences to help reduce clinician burnout

Accelerate and scale the value of your digital health innovations to **help alleviate clinician burnout and improve the workplace experience** for providers and patients.

Contact us today.

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