

# Wellness Wave

Founder: Alex Maloof, MS4 UCSD Gold Humanism Honoree

Advisor: Dr. Tammy Lin

Medical Student Wellness Wave Team:

Beemnet Amdemicael, Harsimran Bajwa, Nissma Bencheikh, Lana Bridi, Victoria Groysberg, Joanna Jain, Esha Lal, Chelsea Maduik, Sumana Mahata, Sahit Menon, Karthik Ramesh, Niveda Rao



ACP California Southern III Region

## Introduction

Physicians and physicians-in-training experience higher rates of burnout, imposter syndrome, anxiety, depression, and suicide, that have increased in the setting of the COVID-19 pandemic. (1) Physicians-in-training (medical students and residents) are uniquely vulnerable to academic, personal, and societal stressors. (2) The Wellness Wave (WW) was developed to promote a culture of wellness in medicine as well as decrease feelings of isolation, especially as trainees explore and pursue career pathways, face many challenges to their well-being, and prepare to enter the workforce. The WW was specifically designed to empower medical students and residents to lead important discussions on the above topics and to incorporate their voices and perspectives into potential solutions.

## Methods

Physician leaders from different career stages and settings nationwide were invited to participate in student-led interviews. Consent forms regarding video release were provided to all participants. Student-led faculty interviews were 5-15 minutes in duration. A customizable interview format is shown in Figure 1. Interviews began with introductions or speakers, including details about their own career pathway selection, journeys, and any career advice they wished to share with physicians-in-training. A second component of each interview focused on best practices regarding wellness, catalyzed by answering a "wellness question" from Table 1. The questions selected were based upon the speaker preference. The final component of each interview was an optional inclusion of a "Wellness Quote" such as "A joyful heart is good medicine." The interviews were released daily throughout the month of February onto a website platform ([acpwellnesswave.org](http://acpwellnesswave.org)) as shown in Figure 3. Five "Keynote Speeches" were released that delved deeper into important wellness themes. The interview release schedule is seen in Figure 2 and was heavily promoted via a social media campaign, through word-of-mouth, and amplified as part of the #ProudtobeGIM campaign. The WW was jointly sponsored by the American College of Physicians Southern California Region III Chapter and the #ProudtobeGIM campaign by the Society of General Internal Medicine.

Figure 1: Interview Format



## Results

Table 1: Wellness Questions

- How to handle perfectionism in medicine?
- How to handle medical mistakes/setbacks?
- How to juggle medical school load plus wellness?
- How to combat burnout?
- Tips on remaining happy during intense study periods
- How to navigate challenging team dynamics?
- How to generate a personalized tool kit to manage stress?
- How to remain strong when dealing with difficult patient situations?
- Resources that are available for seeking help and support as a resident/medical student
- How to create a culture of wellness on a systemic level?

Figure 2: Calendar of the Month

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Welcome by Alex Maloof, Chair of ACP SoCal Region III Committee	2 Kickoff Interview: Dr. Jess Mandel	3 ACP Leader: Dr. Charles J. Hamori	4 ACP Leader: Dr. Chuen-Yuen Angie Chan	5 ACP Leader: Dr. Maher Roman
6 ACP Leader: Dr. Eric B. Dahms	7 Hospitalist IM: Dr. Bradley A. Sharpe	8 Hospitalist IM: Dr. Huy D. Au	9 Hospitalist IM: Dr. Paul B. Aronowitz	10 Program Leadership: Dr. Simerjot K. Jassal	11 Program Leadership: Dr. Susan Kasaf	12 Program Leadership: Dr. Jorge A. Garcia
13 Program Leadership: Dr. Lakshmi K. Puvuva	14 Program Leadership: Dr. Charles O. Goldberg	15 Cardiology IM: Dr. Janet Wei	16 Cardiology IM: Dr. Lori B. Daniels	17 Rheumatology IM: Dr. Gregory O. Middleton	18 Med/Psych: Dr. Andrea N. Weber	19 Psychiatry: Dr. Alana Iglwicz
20 IM Residents: Dr. Olu Akintomi, Dr. Noeha Namineni, Dr. Chris Gonzalez	21 Keynote: Dr. Cynthia Daisy Smith	22 Keynote: Dr. Kerri Palamara McGrath	23 Keynote: Dr. Ashley Busuttill	24 Keynote: Dr. Linda Willies-Jacobo	25 Keynote: Dr. Mario C. Deng & Dr. Frederica Pata	26 GIM: Dr. Joel C. Diamant
27 ACP Wellness Champions: Dr. Suzan Mahal, Dr. Sebastian Mazzotta, Dr. Sharon B. Kim	28 CLOSING EVENT: GIM: Dr. Mukta Panda				4-Mar WINNERS TO RAFFLE ANNOUNCED on website and social media	

Figure 3: Video Library on [acpwellnesswave.org](http://acpwellnesswave.org)

General IM, Hospitalists, IM Subspecialties, Psych ▶ PLAY ALL

- Dr. Bradley Sharpe - Tools to Thrive in Medical School an...
- Dr. Huy Au - Happiness = Expectations - Reality
- Dr. Paul Aronowitz - Find Your Spark
- Dr. Janet Wei - Know Thyself
- Dr. Luis Castellanos - Give Back to Your Community

Keynote Events, Special Panels ▶ PLAY ALL

- Keynote Speaker Dr. Cynthia Smith - Tangible Steps to...
- Keynote Speaker Dr. Kerri Palamara McGrath - The...
- Keynote Speaker Dr. Ashley Busuttill: Breaking Down...
- Keynote Speaker Dr. Linda Willies-Jacobo - ...
- Keynote Speakers Dr. Raia & Dr. Deng - Finding Strength L...

Medical Education Program Leaders ▶ PLAY ALL

- Dr. Simerjot K. Jassal - The Power of Vulnerability
- Dr. Jorge Garcia - Educating the Next Generation of...
- Dr. Lakshmi Puvuva - Giving Back Through Medicine
- Dr. Charlie Goldberg - Lifelong Learning
- Dr. Susan Kasaf - Reflection as a Tool for Growth

ACP Leaders ▶ PLAY ALL

- Dr. Charles Hamori - Authentic Leadership In...
- Dr. Angie Chen - Breaking Free of Fear
- Dr. Maher Roman - Addressing Burnout
- ACP Wellness Wave Kickoff: Dr. Jess Mandel - Ordinary...
- Dr. Eric B. Dahms - Optimizing Perfectionism

## Discussion

The research demonstrating increasing levels of isolation, imposter syndrome, anxiety, depression, burnout, and suicide in medical students and residents is particularly concerning during a formative time in their careers, and as a by-product of the COVID-19 pandemic. (1) Mitigating stressors as well as increasing their access to mentorship, a supportive community, and wellness resources is essential to reversing these trends. (3) The WW bridged this gap by creating a community of physicians and mentors that openly shared advice and discussed important topics related to personal well-being as well as their own coping strategies through candid interviews. Influential institutional leaders discussed ways to create and continue building a culture of wellness and supportive environment. Students were invited to lead these discussions and to help share best practices and resources. A diverse group of physician leaders from 22 affiliated institutions participated as shown in Figure 4. The most prevalent themes discussed during the interviews included burnout in medicine, perfectionism, importance of community and belonging, managing stress, and creating a personalized wellness toolkit.

Figure 4: Participating States



## Conclusion

The launch of WW is the first step in generating a series of videos and activities to foster a culture of wellness in medicine and to promote well-being, connection, and inclusion. The collaboration of a diverse group of student and physician leaders facilitated mentorship and community-building opportunities and increased awareness of wellness resources available. More research and support to decrease the unique stressors for physicians-in-training is vital in the immediate and longer term prior to their entry into the workforce. Future goals include generating additional videos and continuing to build a sense of community between physicians-in-training as well as physician leaders. In-person activities to further promote wellness and connection are planned. Future videos will benefit from additional resident leadership and the inclusion of additional discussions about intersectionality and wellness. Institutions participating in the WW can continue to benefit from trainee leadership in designing content targeted to their needs and the active promotion of a culture of wellness. Creation of a formal evaluation system for the students watching the content as well as the participants to assess the effect of the WW is also planned. If you are interested in participating, sharing ideas, or amplifying this initiative, please connect with us at: [acpregion3medcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:acpregion3medcommittee@gmail.com).

### References:

1. Christophers B, Nieblar-Bedalla E, Gordon-Elliott JS, King Y, Holcomb K, Frey MK. Mental Health of US Medical Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic. J Gen Intern Med. 2021 Oct;36(10):3295-3297. doi: 10.1007/s11606-021-07059-y. Epub 2021 Aug 5. PMID: 34355345; PMCID: PMC8341832.
2. Walkiewicz M, Tartas M. Vulnerability of medical students and professionals to extreme work stress: A select review of the literature. Commun Med. 2017;14(2):181-187. doi: 10.1558/cm.21007. PMID: 29598356.
3. Klein HJ, McCarthy SM. Student wellness trends and interventions in medical education: a narrative review. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 9, 92 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01103-8>