



Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) Comments on The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology: Strategy on Reducing Regulatory and Administrative Burden Relating to the Use of Health IT and EHRs (Draft Report)

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is pleased to offer comments on the ONC's **Strategy on Reducing Regulatory and Administrative Burden Relating to the Use of Health IT and EHRs** draft report, specifically regarding the relationship between EHRs and physician burnout. The FSMB has been active in studying and addressing physician wellness and burnout and welcomes the opportunity to provide its report and recommendations as they pertain to health IT and EHRs.

Founded in 1912, the FSMB is the national non-profit organization representing the 70 state medical and osteopathic boards of the United States, its territories and the District of Columbia. The FSMB serves as a resource and voice on behalf of state medical boards and provides services and initiatives that promote patient safety, quality health care and regulatory best practices.

The FSMB Workgroup on Physician Wellness and Burnout was convened in April of 2016 and spent two years examining burnout from a broad perspective by engaging stakeholders and reviewing existing research and strategies for addressing the issue. Several factors were identified as contributors to burnout, which is characterized by: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished feelings of personal accomplishment. Among those contributing factors was the use of health IT, particularly EHRs, that can be non-intuitive and not yet fully interoperable – creating a need to enter duplicate information. The FSMB report notes the potential value in these systems and does not recommend abandoning them altogether, but instead seeks improvements that consider feedback from end-user physicians.

FSMB Physician Wellness and Burnout Report

The Report offers the following recommendations for Vendors of Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems and standard setting organization:

18. As a promising advancement in the provision and documentation of care, but also a key driver of frustration with medical practice, EHRs need to be improved in a way that takes the user experience into greater consideration than it does currently. This experience may be improved through facilitating greater ease of data entry into the system, as well as ease of access to data from the system. Vendors are encouraged to include end-user physicians on their builder teams to optimize input about operability and interoperability.

19. Efforts to reduce redundant or duplicative entry should be required by standard setting organizations, such as the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), and reflected in the EHR systems ultimately designed by vendors.

20. EHR vendors are encouraged to focus future improvements on facilitating and improving the provision of patient care. The primary purposes of an EHR relate to documentation of care received by a patient, retrieval of patient care related information and data, and patient communication.

The full Report and Recommendations of the Workgroup on Physician Wellness and Burnout can be accessed here: <http://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/policy-on-wellness-and-burnout.pdf>

Conclusion

The FSMB is pleased that the ONC is addressing the pressing issue of the role health IT plays in physician burnout and welcomes the opportunity to meet with ONC to further discuss this matter. Please contact Lisa Robin, Chief Advocacy Officer, at lrobin@fsmb.org or 202-463-4000, should you have any questions.

Thank you.