

# PHYSICIAN SUPPORT LINE:

Confidential Peer-to-Peer Physician Self Care and Prevention of  
Burnout: One Grassroots Solution for Stressors of COVID and Beyond

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# Disclosures:

- ▶ No institutional or financial disclosures





# Infographic

## Physician Support Line

Free Confidential Peer Support Line by  
Volunteer Psychiatrists Helping our US Physician Colleagues  
Navigate the Many Intersections of Our Personal and  
Professional Lives

**1-888-409-0141**

**7 days a week  
8am - 1am ET**

**[www.physiciansupportline.com](http://www.physiciansupportline.com)**

**f Physician Support Line**

**@PhysicianLine**



# Who we are:

- ▶ A support line for physicians run by a community of volunteer psychiatrists
- ▶ Provide peer to peer emotional support to physician colleagues and med students
- ▶ National grass-roots movement started on social media
- ▶ A Call to action for support during covid19
- ▶ Has since evolved to provide emotional support to physicians and medical students navigating any personal or professional intersections





# Why is this only for physicians? How about other HCW?

- ▶ Physicians have double the rate of suicide of the general population
- ▶ We have a systemic double bind that discourages help seeking.
- ▶ Peer to peer models of support have shown to have consistent and sustainable outcomes.
- ▶ We direct non-physicians to other similar resources.



# What is offered?

- ▶ Anonymity
- ▶ No fear of reporting/professional repercussions
- ▶ Safe emotional space/holding space
- ▶ Live psychological crisis intervention using de-escalation, grounding techniques.
- ▶ Further resources: list of mind-body workshops, list of therapists and psychiatrists, local resources, smartphone applications, articles, videos, further reading
- ▶ protocols for safety of self and others if applicable





# What is not offered?

- ▶ Recommendation on medications or supplements
- ▶ Doctor-patient relationship
- ▶ Therapist- client relationship
- ▶ Psych consultation on patients



# Legal

- ▶ A reputed law firm is giving pro-bono services
- ▶ Policies and procedures have been created
- ▶ Laws referenced:- CARES act, Good Samaritan HCW
- ▶ “Standardization” of protocol is important
- ▶ Malpractice coverage is not required for the volunteers
- ▶ Active state licensing is required





# Technology platform

- ▶ Telzio: Hipaa Compliant cloud-based phone system
- ▶ G Suite: for internal communications
- ▶ Website: developed by pro-bono work



# How this works:

- ▶ Caller calls the hotline number and dials a number prompt to be directly connected with a volunteer psychiatrist.
- ▶ On the volunteer end- a volunteer logs into Telzio app and the call is routed to them.
- ▶ Volunteer shifts are 1 hour each: from 8 am to 1 am EST
- ▶ A live google document “sign-up” sheet is shared with volunteers for shifts to be picked up.
- ▶ As of 4.16.2021 volunteer count is 800+





# What are calls like?

- ▶ Completely Anonymous. No required disclosure of identifying information.
- ▶ Caller ID is protected and not disclosed to volunteer on call.
- ▶ Work through an immediate stressor on any subject.
- ▶ No time limit
- ▶ No appointment necessary
- ▶ Can call multiple times but not request specific psychiatrists (no continuity of care)



# Educational activities for volunteers:

- ▶ Weekly educational seminars on the following topics:
  - ▶ Disaster Psychiatry
  - ▶ CBT (specifically in situations like pandemic)
  - ▶ Red Cross/Wuhan China experiences
  - ▶ Racial Injustices in Medicine
  - ▶ Physician Litigation Stress
  - ▶ Psychological First Aid
  - ▶ Motivational interviewing over a support line
  - ▶ Moral Injury, and many more
- ▶ Debriefing:
  - ▶ Once a week within volunteers. Moderated by steering committee.





# Data:

- ▶ Log in an average of ~8,000 minutes of support time per month. That is average of ~4 hours a day.
- ▶ Have supported over 2,000 physician callers since onset
- ▶ Spend an average of 20-60 minutes per call
- ▶ Additionally
  - ▶ Partnered and Collaborated with: AMWA, APA, AMSA, Vibrant Emotional Health, AFSP and Health4theWorld



# What's next?

- ▶ Sustainability of our service past the covid19 crisis
  - ▶ Collaboration with Vibrant Emotional Health – Owners/Operators of National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  - ▶ Ongoing education and mental health advocacy initiatives and programming for national physician organizations, medical schools, and hospital systems
  - ▶ Humans Before Heroes – Partnering with AMWA on changing mental health disclosure requirements on state medical licensing applications to encourage and normalize mental health seeking in physicians.
    - ▶ <https://www.amwa-doc.org/our-work/initiatives/physician-mental-health/>





# Steering Committee:

- ▶ Mona Masood MD - Founder & Chief Organizer
- ▶ Pu Cheng, MD - Co-Founder & Educational coordinator
- ▶ Smita Gautam, MD - Co-Founder & Volunteer Coordinator
- ▶ Allison Cotton, MD - Co-founder & Advertising/ PR coordinator
- ▶ Suzan Song, MD - Co-founder & Legal/Ethical coordinator





# Steering committee..





# Contact us:

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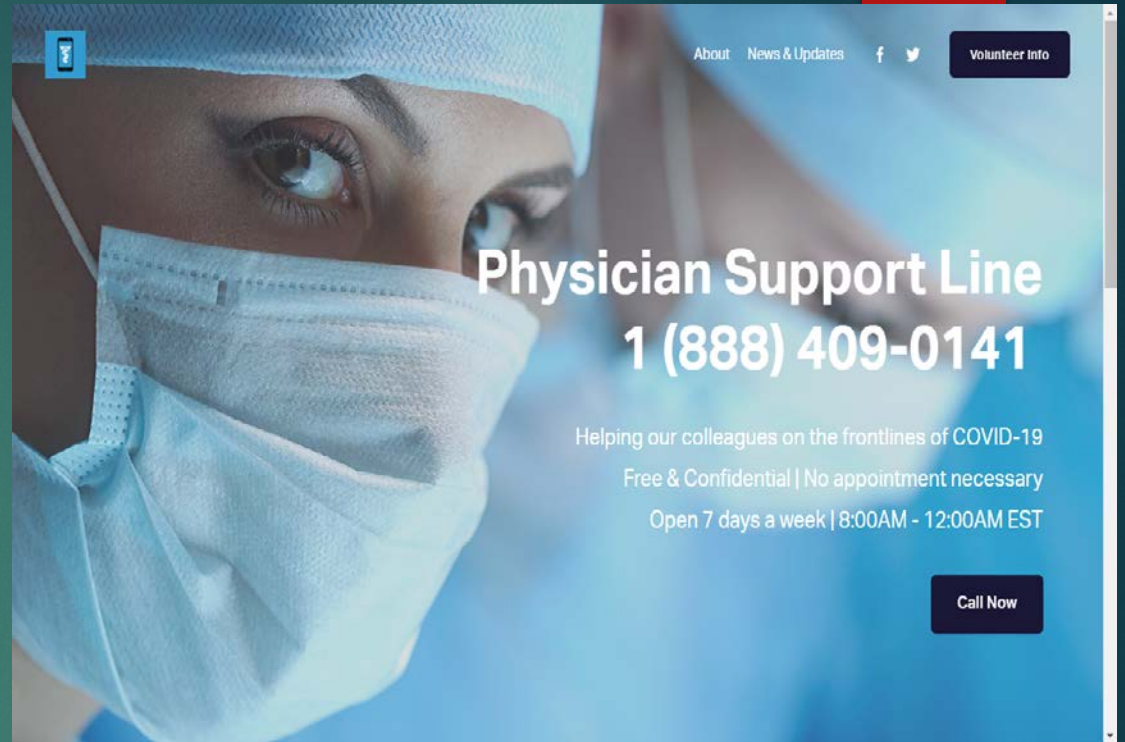
▶ [www.physiciansupportline.com](http://www.physiciansupportline.com)

▶ <https://www.amwa-doc.org/our-work/initiatives/physician-mental-health/>





Spread the word..



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# Physician Support Line

## 1 (888) 409-0141

Helping our colleagues on the frontlines of COVID-19  
Free & Confidential | No appointment necessary  
Open 7 days a week | 8:00AM - 12:00AM EST

Call Now



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Thank you....

