

What's next



Healthcare

How healthcare workers can overcome increased levels of stress and burnout

As the U.S. recognizes the 57th American Heart Month, Nuance CMIO and practicing emergency department physician Reid Conant reflects on how healthcare workers are handling increased levels of stress and burnout—and hope for the future of healthcare.

Dr. Reid Conant

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The last year has given us no shortage of stressors. As a physician, I have seen firsthand the enormous toll that limited resources, high patient acuity, and [uncertainty have taken on all of](#)

us. So much about life in healthcare has changed, from the ways in which we triage suspected COVID cases in the parking lot to our very real worries about getting sick and then sharing that with our families.

Stress can have a profound, physical effect on the body. Not only can it worsen certain conditions, but it can also negatively affect heart function. However, throughout this pandemic – and perhaps paradoxically – we’ve seen a decrease in patient volumes in our emergency department, which has been common across the country. Patients are reluctant to come to the ED out of concern for exposure; when they do come in, they’ve waited too long. For example, the patient who a year ago would have come in with a twinge of chest pain now waits until they’re very ill.

It’s something the American Heart Association [just recently wrote about](#):

. . . during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have delayed or avoided going to hospitals for heart attacks and strokes netting poorer outcomes . . .

In other words, there are many ways to be negatively affected by this pandemic, even when you don’t catch the virus in question. And that remains true for patients and providers alike. Amid these challenges remain two pressures on clinicians: regulatory requirements and documentation burdens.

Mitigating the [stressors that can contribute to burnout](#) has long been a priority for us at Nuance. And while public health has, for the last year, been both top of mind and front and center, we as a healthcare community have sharpened our focus on optimizing and leveraging technologies that can help alleviate these burdens on providers. With the use of integrated, [fully electronic documentation workflows](#), healthcare providers become more comfortable with documentation and more efficient—meaning they’re more likely to get these tasks done on time without having to stay late, come in early, or take work home. This combination not only decreases stressors and burnout while increasing providers’ satisfaction, but it also helps improve patient care.

Tags: [American Heart Month](#), [Physician Burnout](#)

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About Dr. Reid Conant

Dr. Reid Conant is a chief medical information officer for Nuance's Healthcare division. Dr. Conant has provided medical direction and leadership to his hospital through the deployment and optimization of CPOE and physician documentation solutions. Prior to Nuance, Dr. Conant served as the president and founder of Conant and Associates, Inc. which was acquired by Nuance in 2014. For more than eight years, CAI assisted well over 200 organizations, and trained over 10,000 providers on physician documentation solutions. Dr. Conant is an actively practicing board-certified emergency physician and Chief Medical Information Officer of Tri-City Emergency Medical Group in Oceanside, CA. He earned a B.S. in Animal Physiology and Neuroscience at the University of California, San Diego and earned an M.D at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University.

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