New Program Focuses on Surgeon Wellness Through Peer Support

With physician distress a top concern of vascular surgeons, the SVS and its Wellness Task Force are launching a peer support program to help members develop coping techniques and optimize wellness. Launched in 2017, the Wellness Task Force was charged with proactively addressing vascular surgeon burnout with attention to the individual and organizational leadership. Lessons learned from member surveys and focus groups have translated to structured interventions.

“We’re doing something really special here at SVS, with tremendous support from leadership. There are evolving data to support system-supported individual interventions and physician coaching to optimize wellness. While this is being implemented across some institutions, there is no precedent for such as a Society level. It’s exciting and unprecedented; we are grateful for this significant contribution to SVS member support.”

- Dawn Coleman, MD, Co-Chair, SVS Wellness Task Force

The Wellness Task Force is excited to launch an unprecedented, member support program in collaboration with SurgeonMasters, medical professionals dedicated to improving surgeons’ well-being, practice performance and patient outcomes. Centering on strategies and techniques overlooked or underemphasized in traditional medical training, this community empowers surgeons to cultivate a thriving, lifestyle-friendly practice contributing to personal and professional excellence.

"Our medical training and healthcare system has done a great job creating great surgeons. Unfortunately, we have not done nearly as well taking care of ourselves, especially with the increasing demands and expectations the system places on those with the most advanced training. This wellness and peer support program is part of
a culture change that acknowledges that our patients benefit most when we are well and practicing at our best.  - Jeff Smith, MD, SurgeonMasters CEO

Because the holistic health of SVS members is crucial to career satisfaction, the SVS Wellness Task Force is offering a focused program of assistance for all who may be feeling the effects of burnout, adverse outcomes or other types of physician distress.

The task force recognizes that even those who are not feeling burned out now may still need better stress management and wellness skills. Learning the basics of good self-care – from recognizing the signs of burnout to finding ways to relax – helps physicians do their daily best without putting their own health in jeopardy.

Program Description

The SurgeonMasters / SVS Member Support Program is a component of the SVS Wellness program, and it offers monthly resources and self-study opportunities around a community-led support system. Each month the group will tackle subjects such as burnout, adverse outcomes and peer support skills. SurgeonMasters will create monthly co-branded wellness publications, customized to SVS membership needs, that will include self-study exercises, relevant literature/data, and questions to prompt critical discussion.

The goal of the program is to create a culture of support and accountability for our colleagues free of shame, blame and judgment, and without repercussions for addressing our mental and emotional well-being in the face of life and career challenges. We aim to educate, support and empower SVS members.

How Will it Work?

Beginning in November 2019, an article will be posted each month on SVSConnect and the group will encourage discussion and education on the topic for those who wish to learn, share or do more. The monthly topic will heighten awareness of common challenges faced in practice and offer opportunity for additional self-study and even some practical skills that can be practiced, including those that provide support, empowerment and wellness in the surgeon community. In February, a second phase of the program will offer members the opportunity to join peer support conference calls guided by wellness experts.

SVSConnect may be accessed on your desktop or on your mobile device using your SVS credentials. To use the mobile app, search for and download the “MemberCentric (HUG)” app on Google Play or the App Store. Once installed, search for SVS on the welcome screen and log in with your SVS credentials. When you receive a notification prompt about the app icon change, hit “OK” and you’ll be ready to start participating right from your mobile device. Reach out to communications@vascularsociety.org for help logging in.

What is SurgeonMasters, LLC?

SurgeonMasters, LLC has partnered with the SVS to expand a wellness program within the organization. The collaboration is focused initially on creating a network within the SVS that will substantially add a peer-support member benefit. SurgeonMasters, LLC has almost 10 years of experience in creating wellness, peer-support groups, and personalized professional coaching for physicians and surgeons. It supports healthcare professionals and their commitment to outstanding patient care, with the goal of creating sustainable clinical careers.

Example Articles
Burnout vs Moral Injury - And the Winner Is...
Training and Leading Physicians for the Fight Against Moral Injury
Moving Away from Second Victim Syndrome

Social Accounts

Twitter: @SurgeonMasters
Facebook: facebook.com/SurgeonMasters/