SVS Offering Interventions and Support for Member Wellness and Peer Community

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

The Task Force is excited to launch next month 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. “We’re doing something really special here at SVS, with tremendous support from leadership,” said Dawn Coleman, MD, chair of the SVS Wellness Task Force. 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 at a Societal level. It’s exciting and unprecedented; we are grateful for this significant contribution to SVS member support.”

SurgeonMasters will create monthly co-branded wellness publications, customized to SVS membership needs that will embed self-study exercises, relevant literature/data, and questions for consideration to prompt critical discussion.

“We anticipate facilitated online discussions through the private community of SVSConnect, with the potential for future live peer support group calls that hinge on guidance, encouragement, camaraderie, confidentiality, non-judgement and accountability as coached by a professional SurgeonMaster. These monthly platforms for education and discussion will be applicable to our vascular surgery workforce,” notes Dr. Coleman.

Members are encouraged to use existing member platforms for peer support, including social media and the SVSConnect online community to keep conversations flowing in multiple locations. “We know there is great interest out there in this subject,” said Dr. Coleman. “We also recognize the currency of time and other system-level challenges to surgeon wellness. We do hope people will make the time to get the help they need and hope that certain monthly topics will resonate with members.

“Our survey data demonstrated an extremely high prevalence of burnout in SVS members,” said Mal Sheahan, MD, task force vice chair. “We are now trying to transition to practical answers, and this is the first step. We are hoping for a high level of participation from the membership which will give us a mandate to go forward with future initiatives. As an
organization, I think the SVS realizes that we have a huge opportunity to help vascular surgeons.

“It’s a pretty remarkable thing for our leadership to support,” Dr. Coleman said. “This shows a great commitment to our membership. We will continue to advocate for our membership across all levels of challenge.’

Get Connected to SVSConnect

With task force members planning to discuss the wellness topics on the SVSConnect online community, the time is now to make sure all members can participate there, including on the mobile app.

Only SVS members may be part of the Connect community. Go to vsweb.org/SVSConnect. The site will direct visitors either to the application process or, if already a member, a spot to sign in. Members will need to know their 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.

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