



ECHO IDAHO: **Healthcare Vitality**

**Empowering Healthcare Professionals:
Addressing Moral Injury
and Navigating Ethical Dilemmas**

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Learning Objectives

- Introduction to Moral Injury
- Moral Injury vs. Burnout
- Moral injury and COVID 19
- Personal examples of moral injury

Moral Injury

Moral injury: the betrayal of what is right by someone who holds legitimate authority in a high-stakes situation (Jonathan Shay)

Later expanded to include: perpetrating, failing to prevent or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations (Brett Litz, et al)

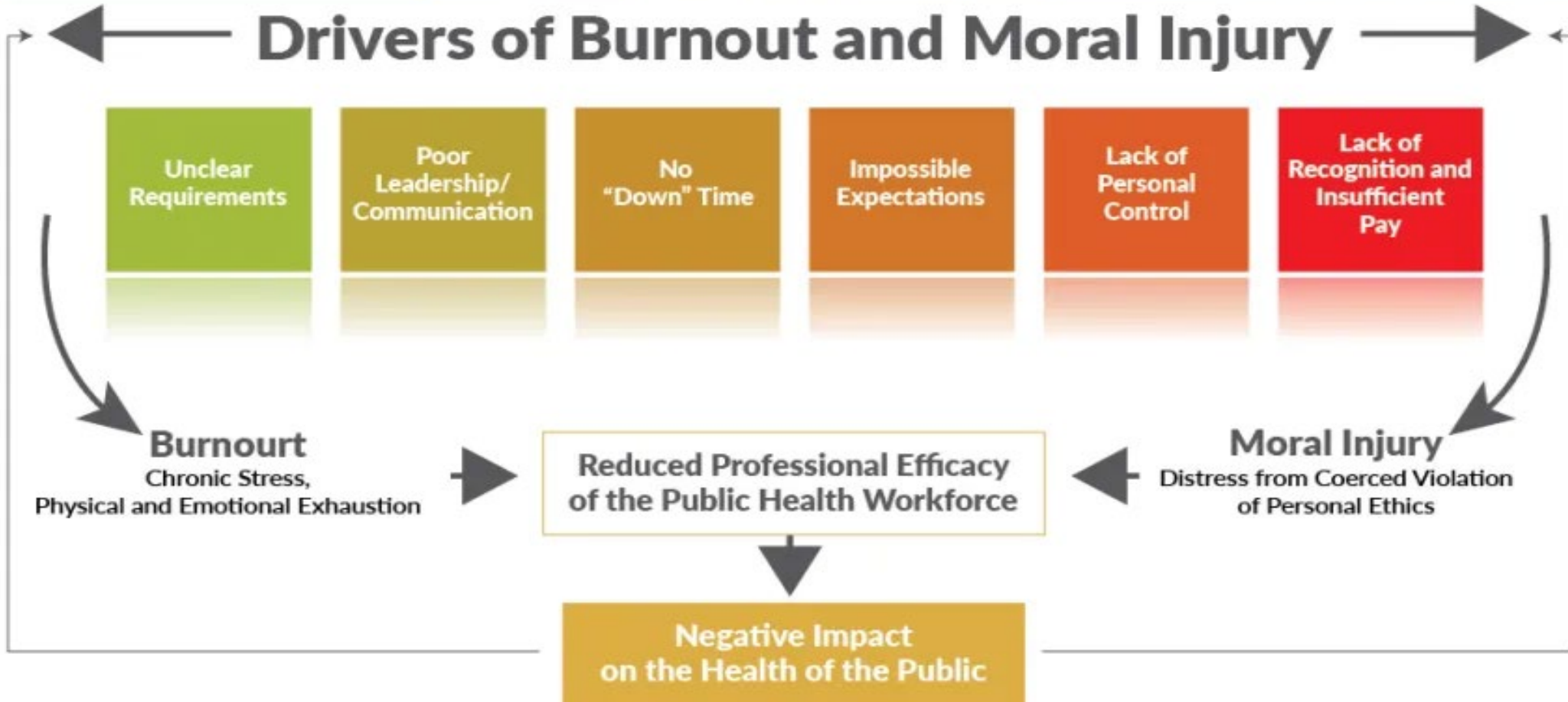
Moral Injury vs. Burnout

- Often coincide
- Burnout: exhaustion, ineffectiveness, depersonalization
- Moral injury: frustration, anger, shame

“Healthcare workers aren’t quitting because they can’t handle their jobs. They’re quitting because they can’t handle being unable to do their jobs.” – Ed Yong, The Atlantic



Drivers of Burnout and Moral Injury



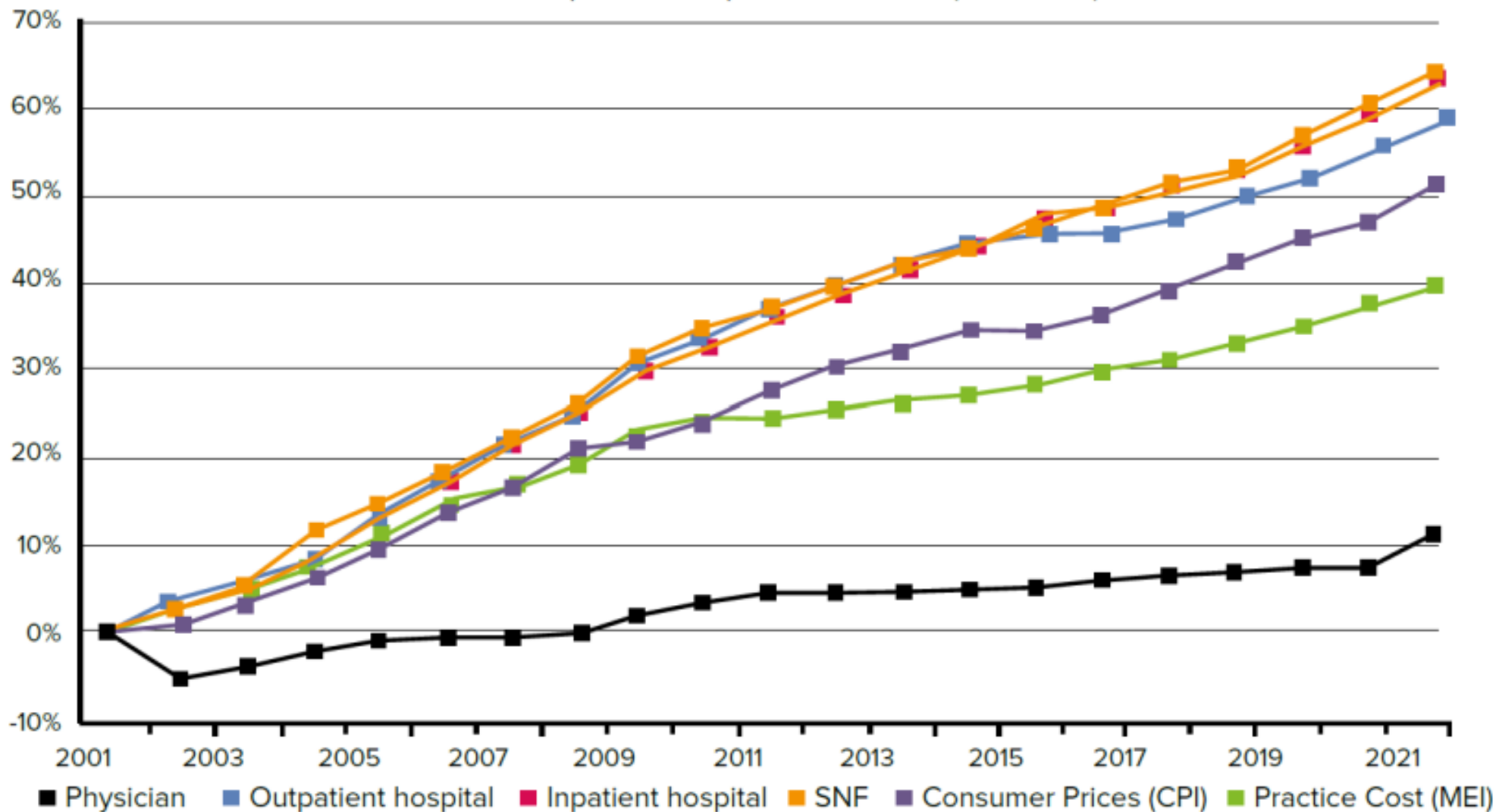
Source: Adapted from National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, (2019). Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25521>.

It's Not Burnout: it's Moral Injury

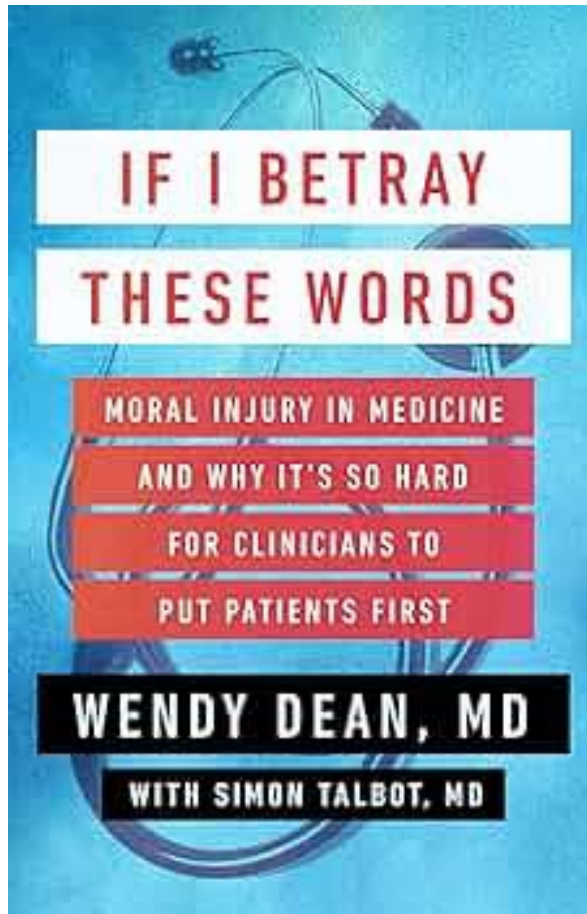


Moral Injury
moralinjury.healthcare

Medicare Updates Compared to Inflation (2001-2021)



Sources: Federal Register, Medicare Trustees' Reports and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



“By now corporate medicine has milked just about all the efficiency it can out of the system....it has pushed the productivity numbers about as far as they can go. But one resource that seems endless and free is the professional ethic of medical staff members. This ethic holds the entire enterprise together. If doctors and nurses clocked out when their paid hours were finished the effect on patients would be calamitous. Doctors and nurses know this which is why they don't shirk. The system knows it too, and takes advantage.”

Dr. Daniel Ofri, NYT Jun 8, 2019

Ideal vs. Force

- Constant expectations
 - External pressures
 - Fatigue
- Prescribing Narcotics
 - To whom do you answer?
 - Patient
 - Guidelines
 - Institution
 - Self

My COVID Experience

- Viewbox
- Phone Conversations
- Family Time



COVID in the ER

Pressures

- Exhaustion
- Mandated/restricted treatments
- Denial
- Essential vs. Nonessential

Coping

- Compartmentalize
- Empowered
- Useful

COVID

In the ICU

**1 person,
1 family at
a time**

- Changing policies every shift
 - No N95 or PPE in the beginning
 - 1st patient coded 9 months before vaccine
 - Was told no need to prepare
 - Goodbyes over IPAD
 - Maybe 10 staff remaining
-
- Taking list home nightly
 - Equal say but not equal expertise
 - mSOFA being required

References

- Dean, Wendy. “Moral Injury in Medicine: Reframing and Repair. Seattle Childrens Grand Rounds, Nov 3 2023. [Moral Injury in Medicine: Reframing and Repair \(seattlechildrens.org\)](https://seattlechildrens.org)
- Dean, W. and Talbot, S. *If I Betray These Words: Moral Injury in Medicine and Why It’s So Hard for Clinicians to Put Patients First*. Steerforth Press. 2023.
- Svoboda, E. “Moral Injury Is an Invisible Epidemic That Affects Millions.” *Scientific American*. Sept 19 2022.