

Physician Support Programs: SPSP

Saskatchewan Physician Support Program

Stress is inevitable. Struggling is optional.

Did you know?

That the most common personal difficulties for physicians and their families arise from:

- substance abuse/addiction
- mental health issues (depression, stress, etc.)
- work/family imbalance

One out of every 10 physicians will become dependent on psychoactive drugs or alcohol sufficient to impair the practice of medicine at some time during their careers.

One out of every 100 physicians will become a narcotics addict at some time during their career.

Compared to controls, medical residents are 5.5 times more likely to use sleeping pills, stimulants, and other drugs.

Approximately 40% of female and 27% of male medical students and residents experience pronounced symptoms of anxiety or depression.

Between 30 and 50% of physicians report anxiety, sleeplessness, or depression in reaction to personal problems (significantly higher than in other professions).

The suicide rate for physicians is twice that of the general population. The suicide rate of physicians' wives is higher than the rate for wives of any other professional group.

On average, male physicians work between 68 and 80 hours per week. Married female physicians, in addition to taking major responsibility for home and family, work 90% as much as their male colleagues.

Approximately 50% of first time marriages for those under the age of 35 end in divorce.

Physicians under the age of 45 consistently indicate that their most toxic stressor is the struggle with work/family imbalance and its effect on home life.

The practice of medicine is often the last area to be affected for a physician in difficulty.

The Saskatchewan Physician Support Program (SPSP) is a committee of the Saskatchewan Medical Association mandated to assist physicians struggling with physical, mental, personal or financial stress.

The Committee was originally established to help physicians who suffered impairment due to abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs; however, it has recognized that, as human beings, physicians may struggle with issues beyond substance abuse.

As a result, it has expanded its mandate to be more effective in providing assistance to physicians and their families who require support in many areas of their lives.

The Saskatchewan Physician Support Program also strives to support and assist in a preventative manner.

Referral sources and those accessing service can be reassured that **all information remains strictly confidential**, and that the committee itself operates independently of Government, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, and Regional Health Authorities.

Committee members are highly motivated, compassionate and knowledgeable in the field of physician health and well being. They assist physicians and their families in whatever way necessary to access the necessary education, rehabilitation, support, and maximize the potential for physicians to continue in effective medical practice.

If you are in need of assistance or would like to refer someone to the program, the Committee can be contacted through:

Ms Brenda Senger,
Director of Physician Support Programs
Saskatchewan Medical Association
Phone: 244-2196
Toll Free: 1-800-667-3781
402-321A 21st Street East
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0C1

A list of SPSP Committee members and contact information can be found on the SMA members-only website or through the SMA office.

