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MAY 24, 2021



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**EXECUTIVE  
WELLNESS**  
PANEL

Mental Health | Concierge Medicine | Telehealth | Work-Life Balance

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**O**n May 19th, the Los Angeles Business Journal hosted a digital event on Executive Wellness. A panel of experts addressed the importance of maintaining health through such challenging circumstances for those leading our community.

Topics included mental health, concierge medicine, telehealth, and ways we can improve work-life balance for our organizations. This outstanding group of panelists examined the issues as they shared their experiences and suggestions for best practices for the year to come. Executive wellness plans, nutrition, resilient workforces and general health and fitness were all explored.



#### David Iwane, Ph.D.

*Vice President of Human Resources and Associate Professor in the I/O Business Psychology Program  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology*



“Executive wellness and well-being programs have become so essential to organizations today that the absence of an established plan may put companies in disadvantaged positions.”



#### Denise Pines

*Board of Directors  
Federation of State Medical Boards*



“Resilience is still the best friend we need to help us heal ourselves and embrace the challenges of this current time with wisdom, compassion, and skillful means – like employee wellness programs and integrated technology.”



#### Jackie Keller

*Founding Director, NutriFit  
Board of Directors, Foundation of the Womens' Presidents Organization*



“What is most important is to enlighten (provide insight, identify strengths), encourage (motivate, build self-efficacy), enable (plan, remind, support and evaluate) and inspire our employees and communities to achieve their personal and professional goals.”



#### Graham Tse, M.D.

*Chief Medical Officer  
MemorialCare Miller Children & Women's Hospital Long Beach*



“As a health care organization, we took a serious look at how we were supporting our physicians and staff who were not only physically exhausted, but mentally and emotionally drained.”



#### Christina Miller, Ph.D.

*President and CEO  
Mental Health America of Los Angeles*



“Mental health is not a binary phenomenon. We all face mental health challenges at some time. Learning key resiliencies can fortify us against the impact of past and future traumas.”

To view highlights from the virtual event, visit  
[labusinessjournal.com/ExecutiveWellness](http://labusinessjournal.com/ExecutiveWellness)



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# Cancer Doesn't Wait: Early Detection is Key

By ROBERTO MADRID, MD

Keeping up with your health is one of the most important ways to take care of yourself. Now is the perfect time to make sure you're on track with your annual wellness checks and health screenings.

Screenings are instrumental in properly diagnosing and/or preventing a variety of medical conditions, including cancer. As a physician, I encourage people to take an active role in their healthcare by scheduling screenings and doctor appointments, as necessary. Cancer is a disease that is crucial to catch early. Regular cancer screenings can help detect problems early, when your chances for treatment and cure are better.

You may have chosen to postpone your cancer screenings during the coronavirus pandemic. Delays in screenings can cause healthcare providers to miss the window for early detection and ultimately lead to a diagnosis that's more advanced, with limited treatment options and poorer outcomes.

Healthcare providers are adopting best practices for safe patient visits, so you can have the peace of mind that your healthcare team is available and committed to caring for you safely. If you are due to schedule your

regular cancer screenings, like a mammogram, pap smear, colonoscopy or lung cancer screening – and especially if you have any concerning symptoms – don't delay getting the care you need. Cancer doesn't wait and neither should you.

Here are some common screenings that can detect certain cancers:

## BREAST CANCER SCREENING

Breast cancer screenings begin at age 40 and should occur annually. The American College of Radiology states that mammography screenings have assisted in the reduction of deaths due to breast cancer in the United States by 1/3 since 1990. The goal of screening mammography is to detect breast cancer at an early stage when it is most treatable. In fact, cancers that are confined to the breast have survival rates greater than 98%.

## CERVICAL CANCER (PAP SMEAR)

This test checks the cells from inside a woman's cervix for any changes that could lead to cancer. The cervix is the lower part of a woman's uterus that opens into the vagina. You may need this screening to look for cervical cancer or changes in cervical cells that might eventually lead to cancer. Major

medical groups generally advise that women get regular Pap tests every three years starting at age 21. Getting a regular Pap test can be life-saving. Cervical cancer is a serious type of cancer in women. It is also one of the most treatable types when found early.

## COLONOSCOPY TEST

A colonoscopy is a test used to detect any abnormalities and remove polyps that can potentially cause colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in the country, however it has a high cure rate—over 95%—if detected early.

## LUNG CANCER SCREENING

Lung cancer screenings are of the utmost importance for those who are 55 to 80 years old and have smoked a pack a day for over 30 years, are current smokers or who have quit smoking in the last 15 years. It is also a good idea to get screened if you've been exposed long-term to second-hand smoke or environmental pollution.

## SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

Your overall health is as important as ever. Take action now and schedule an appointment with your doctor to see which screenings are

Healthcare providers are adopting best practices for safe patient visits, so you can have the peace of mind that your healthcare team is available and committed to caring for you safely. If you are due to schedule your regular cancer screenings, don't delay in getting the care you need.

most appropriate for you.

Roberto Madrid MD, is vice president of Medical Group Operations for PIH Health Physicians. PIH Health's doctors' offices, imaging centers and outpatient centers are open and safe to get care. Visit [PIHHealth.org/Screenings](http://PIHHealth.org/Screenings) to learn about cancer screening services at PIH Health. To find a PIH Health Physician near you, visit [PIHHealth.org/Find-a-Doctor](http://PIHHealth.org/Find-a-Doctor).

# Executive Wellness is a Worthy Investment

By DAVID IWANE, Ph.D.

Successful businesses and organizations bought into the concept of employee wellness long ago. The benefits of these programs – improved productivity, morale, retention – demonstrates the importance of this investment. In fact, a recent survey found 84% of large employers – those with more than 200 employees – offered their staff workplace wellness programs of some kind.

And the focus on employee wellness has increased dramatically post-COVID. The significant changes to the workplace – changes that will continue for months – means the stress and anxiety that workers already were dealing with has only magnified. If ever there was a time for wellness in the workplace, it's now.

But who's ensuring the wellness of those company and organization leaders?

*"A company is a living - breathing being, with executives acting as the vital organs that keep it going..."*

*Corporate Wellness Magazine*

We know the critical role an effective CEO, executive director or manager plays in any organization's success. So, are those important leaders taking advantage of wellness programs? HR professionals work diligently to develop and provide these programs to their employees but are they also focused on ensuring the company's leadership is also taking advantage? And have they developed specific wellness programs for that leadership? Being at the helm of a large company or organization

Getting an effective wellness program developed and launched is no easy task. It often requires a culture shift within the organization – a new emphasis on health and wellness that must be expressed and "lived" from top to bottom in the company.

generates a unique level of stress and pressure than must be addressed in order to adequately support executive leadership. The post-COVID workplace has only heightened those stress levels.

Getting an effective wellness program developed and launched is no easy task. It often requires a culture shift within the organization – a new emphasis on health and wellness that must be expressed and "lived" from top to bottom in the company. Effective wellness programs aren't just standalone projects. Their goals must be sewn into the company's policies, programs and procedures – even the organization's behaviors. The best way to ensure a wellness program's success is with buy-in from the entry level worker to the executive suite.

And the best way for leadership to encourage employees to participate – and therefore generate the benefits we know these programs can produce – is to demonstrate their own

support – even enthusiasm – for wellness.

Wellness programs take many forms: Weight loss challenges, smoking cessation support, lunchtime yoga classes, healthy cooking demonstrations – all contribute to improved employee health. But even those companies and organizations that provide wellness programs struggle with employee participation.

While a large percentage of workers agree with the concept, most surveys have shown those same workers are only willing to invest less than an hour a day to their wellness. That includes time devoted to preparing healthy meals, exercise, monitoring their health or any other wellness activities. Most experts agree – less than an hour may not be enough to generate the results these investments require in order to pay off.

But there are strategies companies can implement to encourage greater worker participation. At the top of that list is leadership participation.

Not only will the executives and directors themselves benefit from taking part in wellness program – better managing their stress and improving their overall health – they will simply lead by example.

- Daily walks around the block led by the boss can become a powerful symbol of both health and leadership.
- Hosting or leading healthy cooking demonstrations – with an assist from nutritionists or healthy foods chefs – will not only inform but entertain.
- Investments in old-fashioned sports teams.
- Starting meetings with guided meditation or simple breathing exercises.

These are only a few ideas and some may not be possible. Not every company or organization is located near walkable property or greenspace. But there are plenty of ways for a company, and particularly, a company's leadership, to demonstrate the importance of their worker's health.

We're in the process of ending a year-long lockdown. Many of our employees that are returning to the workplace filled with anxiety – not only about their health but also about their economic future. An investment in new, or a relaunch of current wellness programs – with leadership front and center – could be the best way to welcome them back.

David Iwane, Ph.D. is vice president of human resources at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Los Angeles. To learn more, contact Dr. Iwane at [diwane@thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:diwane@thechicagoschool.edu) or (213) 615-7268.



# MemorialCare Used Systemic, Comprehensive Approach to Address Clinician Burnout and Compassion Fatigue During Global Pandemic

**By: Graham Tse, M.D.,**

physician in charge, COVID Command Center, MemorialCare's Long Beach Medical Center and Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, in recent years, there has been a rise in prevalence of burnout among clinicians (more than one-half of physicians and one-third of nurses experiencing symptoms). Burnout is a long-term stress reaction marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of sense of personal accomplishment.

Burnout, stress-related disorders and compassion fatigue rose to epic levels over the last year as our health care workforce faced a global pandemic — further deepening the issue.

As a health care organization, we had to take a serious look at how we were supporting our physicians, clinical teams and staff who were not only physically exhausted, but mentally and emotionally drained. Experiencing or witnessing life threatening or traumatic events impacts everyone differently. In some circumstances, the distress of experiencing or witnessing something traumatic may result in clinically significant distress or impairment, such as acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or secondary traumatic stress.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, MemorialCare launched its Caring with Compassion Program that brought together tools and resources to support employee resilience and maintain joy at work.

MemorialCare is a 1,350-bed nonprofit health system, which includes more than 2,600 affiliated physicians located in Southern California and two Los Angeles County hospitals (Long Beach Medical Center and Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach). Together, these two hospitals make up the second largest medical campus in the western United States.

The Caring with Compassion Program is multi-faceted, addressing all aspects of mental and spiritual wellness. Several resources are available to all physicians and staff within the health system:

- Resilience in Stressful Events (RISE) is a confidential peer-to-peer support program designed to help physicians, nurses and other staff members cope with and navigate the specific stresses that can result from working in a health care setting.

- Tea for the Soul is a moment for staff to take an intentional pause and step away from the chaos of their busy day to do self-care. The Tea for the Soul program counteracts the effects of compassion fatigue, burnout, and moral distress.
- SilverCloud uses a blend of online programs complete with interactive tools to help manage anxiety, depression, stress and trouble sleeping.
- Code Lavender Pause is called internally within the respective unit, immediately after a difficult code or distressing event occurs on that unit. Any member of the inter-disciplinary team can call a Code Lavender Pause to provide a debrief and check in with the team following the crisis or stressful event.
- Spiritual Care affirms the important role that spiritual health brings to the health care setting and respectfully supports the spiritual well-being of staff.

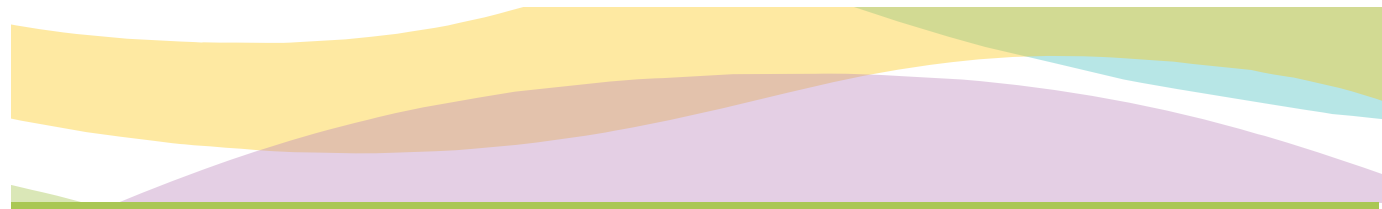
As the needs of the workforce grew, the Caring with Compassion Program was expanded with the launch of WISE (Well-Being in Stressful Events). WISE added weekly on-site debriefings with spiritual care and mental health professionals, as well as virtual support groups.

These health care professional support groups are open to all employees regardless of level, position or location, as well as physicians. The support groups were created in collaboration with MemorialCare psychologists and The Guidance Center, a mental health organization that has provided support to our patients and employees for more than two decades.

Additionally, all employees have access to the Well-Being Index™, a short, anonymous online self-assessment that evaluates the dimensions of distress. The tool provides results that can be compared against national averages and peers. Based on the results, the index provides resources and next steps for improved well-being. The information provided is meant to help employees start the conversation and take important steps about their well-being.

While we have turned a corner on this global pandemic, and many things will return to "normal," what will remain is the systemic and comprehensive support in place for our physicians, clinical teams and staff.





# Outsmart Your Pain by Finding Your Internal Support Group

By CHRISTIANE WOLF, M.D.

When we are in the thick of a personal struggle, it would seem that the last thing on our mind would be the pains and difficulties of other people. As it turns out, research shows that going through hardship and pain makes us more compassionate and empathetic to others over time, especially to people who are going through similar challenging experiences. We begin to see with more clarity and tenderness that others struggle, too, which in turn makes us feel less isolated and less prone to self-pity.

Think about the most compassionate person you know. What do you know about their life? Are you aware of their struggles and hardship? There is a good chance that this person has had their fair share of adversity and misfortune. As the saying goes, “What doesn’t kill us makes us stronger”—and research suggests it also makes us kinder!

The philosopher Ken Wilber writes in his book *No Boundary* that “Suffering smashes to pieces the complacency of our normal fictions about reality and forces us to become alive in a special sense—to see carefully, to feel deeply, to touch ourselves and our worlds in ways we have heretofore avoided.”

(Patient) Mona told me that when her pain first started she felt like she had been cast out of a happy universe. She so longed to be back there. In the same way that a person who moves from light into darkness can’t see anything at first, she felt utterly confused, alone, and lost. But like eyes adjust to the dark, at some point Mona realized that around her were other people with similar struggles. She was not alone. There was life and joy in her “new universe,” but with a slightly different flavor, seasoned with a deep knowing about pain.

After some time of living with chronic pain, we might experience the lifting of a veil that was hiding another reality—one that we have been initiated into. We can suddenly identify pain in others, be it physical or emotional pain, and that familiarity releases a strong flow of compassion. Compassion is a combination of love and pain: When we bring spacious love to pain it turns into compassion. With compassion, pain is accompanied by love. Love is a strong positive emotion that—when experienced at the same time as pain—changes how we feel. Just like salt undeniably changes the flavor of the broth.

Studies show that people who have gone through a lot of adversity not only feel more compassion but are also willing to help and to give their time, money, and energy to those in need. It has long been known that people from a lower socioeconomic status score higher in empathy and compassion. The reason might be that in less-than-ideal circumstances people need to rely more on each other for support.

We can’t overcome adversity alone. We need people to take care of us when we’re sick—to cook, to take care of the dog, to drive us to doctor’s appointments. After natural disasters like Superstorm Sandy (in 2012) and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the neighborhoods that rebounded the quickest were the ones that showed neighbors care for each other and could be counted on for



support. We can’t do it alone, but we can get through it together.

Helping others also counterbalances the dangerous tendency to self-isolate and head down a spiral of self-pity when you’re in pain. You might recall from chapter 4 that self-compassion and self-pity are quite different.

In self-pity, as with self-compassion, we acknowledge that what is happening to us is hard. But in self-pity, there is no space to recognize another person’s suffering. All our attention contracts around us alone and how bad things are in our own world. Self-pity compounds the sense of isolation, the feeling that we’ve been singled out in misery and pain. It almost never inspires taking action or reaching out for help. It often leads to blaming others while waiting to be rescued, and it fosters a victim mentality.

Self-compassion is the same in that it also acknowledges that our experience is painful and challenging. We approach with care and compassion, the way we would with a dear friend who was struggling: “It is SO hard to feel that way!” But self-compassion doesn’t collapse into isolation. Instead it opens into an acknowledgment that what is happening to us is part of being human.

Years ago, when a dear friend and colleague of mine was diagnosed with breast cancer she shared that after the initial struggle with the question “Why me?” she realized that she needed to equally ask and reflect on the question “Why not me?”

“I know the numbers,” she said. “I know how many women are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, so it’s fair to ask, ‘Why shouldn’t it have been me?’ I don’t have an answer for that. This realization helps me to be kind to myself when I fall into the pit of self-pity.”

Of course, there is nothing wrong with feeling self-pity because it’s a natural response in this kind of situation! But there are many, many other people who know exactly what you are feeling because they have been in the same situation. This is not to diminish your pain and how bad it is—not at all! It extends the hand of connection that says, “Yes, me, too!” I get it. I get you. And yes, it is that bad.

It can be a big relief to learn that someone else has had the same experience, tragedy, or diagnosis. It doesn’t change what you’re experiencing, but it lifts the burden of being alone with your suffering. In a mysterious way, it softens the pain to know we are not alone and that there is nothing wrong with feeling the way we

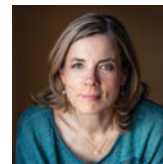
do. Hello, we’re human! This recognition can be the tiny movement of the needle that moves the pain from unbearable to somewhat, somehow bearable.

Not good, not gone, but bearable.

This mix of self-compassion—of realizing that we are not alone and that we can’t do it alone—and the shattering of the illusion of a perfect life or a perfect outcome is deeply transformative. We stop being so afraid of pain, be it our own pain or that of others. And we can start to be guided by Ram Dass’ beautiful reminder that we are all just “walking each other home.”

*Note: This article is an excerpt from Christiane Wolf’s new book, “Outsmart Your Pain: Mindfulness and Self-Compassion to Help You Leave Chronic Pain Behind.”*

Christiane Wolf, M.D., Ph.D., is an internationally known, Los Angeles-based certified mindfulness-based stress reduction trainer and director of the VA’s national mindfulness training program for clinicians. Learn more at [christianewolf.com](http://christianewolf.com).







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# Workplace Safety and Wellness is the Top Priority for Business Leaders in 2021

According to a recent survey conducted by Oasis, a Human Resources services provider, ensuring a safe work environment amid COVID-19 is the top priority among business leaders. Workplace safety is emphasized more than other important business considerations such as talent acquisition and professional development.

For its annual research, Oasis, a Paychex Company, conducted a national survey of 300 business leaders who employed 5 to 99 employees from a broad cross-section of industries. The results are now available in its white paper 2021 Priorities for Business Leaders: A U.S. Survey, which reveal that workplace safety during the COVID-19 pandemic is the top priority among those surveyed. Oasis noted in a recent press release that shifting priorities due to COVID-19 have pushed talent acquisition from the top of the list—a spot it has held for the past two years. Employee safety and well-being are now top priorities in the year ahead.

“2021 will be challenging as businesses, in particular small and mid-size businesses,

navigate safely bringing employees back to work and adjust to the long-term impact of the pandemic,” said Teresa Carroll, president of Oasis. “No matter the industry they serve, all businesses have had to adapt to new regulations and local and state mandates as the pandemic evolves. Likewise, whether employees have faced cutbacks or mental health challenges brought on by the pandemic, all workers have been impacted. In turn, this has brought workforce management and overall physical, financial, mental, and social employee wellness front and center among business leaders’ list of priorities.”

When asked which issues will become more challenging over the next 12 months compared with the past year, respondents replied:

- Ensuring a safe workplace in light of COVID-19: 36%
- Offering competitive compensation and benefits (including employee assistance programs): 31%
- Developing employees and future leaders for succession: 29%
- Attracting strong, competent manage-

ment and dedicated, capable staff: 28%

- Maintaining ongoing regulatory compliance: 28%

The press release highlighted other key findings from the survey, including:

- General stress levels are higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic, with 21% of business leaders feeling “much more stressed.” Furthermore, 54% of business leaders say they are more aware of their employees’ stress levels than before COVID-19.

- Keeping employees engaged and productive is a higher priority now than it was at the start of 2020, with 16% reporting it is a “much higher priority now.”

- 36% of business leaders report that they want to make employee benefits easier to access and more affordable. 33% want to improve the overall benefits they offer in order to remain competitive when recruiting and retaining top talent.

This trend of companies increasing their focus on workplace wellness and safety high-

**‘No matter the industry they serve, all businesses have had to adapt to new regulations and local and state mandates as the pandemic evolves.’**

lights once again the necessity for HR professionals to work closely alongside an organization’s environment, health, and safety (EHS) team to effectively address hazards facing the workforce.

Oasis is a national Professional Employer Organization (PEO) specializing in providing HR services, employee benefits administration, payroll and tax administration, risk management services, and staffing solutions to businesses throughout the United States. For more information, visit [oasisadvantage.com](http://oasisadvantage.com).

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- Returning to Work
- Life after the Pandemic
- Maintaining a Workplace During Remote Operations
- And others



To learn more, contact Dr. David Iwane, VP of Human Resources, at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology at [diwane@thechicagoschool.edu](mailto:diwane@thechicagoschool.edu) or 213-615-7268.



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY'S 2020 GREATER LOS ANGELES LIGHT THE NIGHT EXECUTIVE CHALLENGERS

The Greater Los Angeles Executive Challenge recognizes individuals that raised beyond **\$5,000** for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

**Total \$439,246**



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