

Well-Being in the Workplace

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Seventy-five years ago in the City of New Orleans, Ochsner's 5 founding fathers launched the first multidisciplinary group practice of its kind in an effort to provide quality healthcare with peace of mind to the citizens of the Gulf South region. In the words of Dr. Alton Ochsner, "Our goal in forming the clinic is to keep people well, useful, and happy."

Dr Ochsner wasn't just referring to patients. His goal also encompassed the health and happiness of the clinicians and employees at the new clinic. As usual, he was ahead of his time.

In recent years, our profession has turned increasing focus on well-being in the workplace, and today that focus is laser sharp. The medical accrediting organizations and the professional societies recognize that a big component of excellent patient care and outcomes is the overall wellness of the members of the care teams and the support staffs at hospitals and clinics.

Ochsner is taking a leadership role in workplace wellness. One initiative is to survey physicians about our work environment. The responses and ideas that come from this survey will be used to make the workplace for all healthcare workers, not just physicians, an environment that promotes everyone's well-being to enhance individual success and personal welfare.

I believe that the 5 keys to a successful practice in medicine are

1. Excellence in everything
2. Efficiency in teamwork
3. Always being a caring individual
4. Always being a compassionate provider
5. Always serving as an advocate for patients

To maintain a caring and compassionate outlook toward others, caregivers must also show themselves care and

compassion by taking self-time and doing what they most enjoy, whether exercising, reading, meditating, or spending time with family and friends. We each have the ability to nurture ourselves in these ways, but sometimes a little extra help is required, and Ochsner has programs already in place to promote well-being that go beyond counseling. We have resources to address some of the small irritations that can escalate into bad days—help with finding a plumber or a mechanic, for example. A pilot project in anesthesia showed us that many residents don't know about these resources, so a systemwide effort to make everyone aware of these assets is planned. Other initiatives are in the works.

Everyone has heard the phrase "a canary in a coalmine." The coalmine canaries acted as harbingers of unsafe conditions. They were resilient little birds with a strong capacity to recover and to spring back fully. It's important to understand that the goal of workplace well-being is not to make the canary more resilient. The goal is much greater. As Dr Ochsner said 75 years ago, our goal is to create a place where we can all thrive—physically, professionally, and emotionally.

The articles in this issue of the *Ochsner Journal* touch on all 3 of those themes. We are proud to present an array of original research articles that indicate the breadth of the investigations being done here—an excellent reflection of professional success. In terms of physical health, for more than 30 years, the Alton Ochsner Award has been presented to researchers who have made important discoveries into the links between tobacco and disease. We celebrate their work and accomplishments in this issue. And to understand something about the emotional fulfillment of healthcare practice, travel with 5 medical students and Dr Yvens Laborde to a tiny town in Haiti.