"I LOVE my job. I have wonderful patients. They are appreciative and we have built positive relationships in my 5 years of practice."

"Taking very high level care of patients and teaching students, residents, and fellows"

"The overall morale of physicians is as low as I have ever seen it."

"I don’t have time to just be human."

Results from July 2022 Survey Show the Highs & Lows of Practicing Medicine thru and out of a Pandemic
Out of 292 respondents the survey results show Vermont clinicians are stressed by their practice environments, yet are extremely passionate about providing the very best care to their patients and families and advocating on their behalf.

Delivering Patient Care Well/Helping Others: 143
Patient Interactions/Relationships: 89
Solving a Challenging Diagnosis/Problem: 8
Being Appreciated by Management/Patients: 3
Relationships with Colleagues/Peers: 38
Teaching (Fellows/Students): 22
Engaging in CME/Learning New Things: 8
Research: 5
Prospect of Retirement/Vacation/Time Away from the Office: 4
Doesn’t Have Anything that Provides them with Satisfaction: 2
Work-life Balance/Work Environment/Work Supports: 5

The Highs
“Being able to spend time with families. When I can spend more time with a family educating and answering questions I am most satisfied. Unfortunately in medicine right now we have to see more and more patients to be able to support our overhead and staff.”

“Treating patients at the bedside, but there is so much that is frustrating, from over regulation, EMRs,... the list is long.”

“Working for an organization that supports me and my colleagues. Working with people who love the work they do. Having VMS colleagues who are so dedicated to patient advocacy.”

What Brings Satisfaction?
What is the most pressing issue impacting your satisfaction practicing medicine and/or ability to sustain your practice of medicine?

Out of 292 respondents the survey results show Vermont clinicians remain committed to their patients, but many are burned out from an unsustainable workload, exacerbated by administrative burdens and overbearing EMRs.

Under-staffing or Lack of Supportive Leadership Team: 91
Administrative Burden/EHR/Prior Auth: 91
Reimbursement/Compensation: 76
Lack of Work-Life Balance or Burnout: 32
Mental Health Support for Patients and Physicians: 18
Loss of Autonomy/Corporatization of Health Care: 16
Patient Access to Care: 9
COVID: 4

The Lows

"I am a first year medical student looking at family practice. I am most concerned about being able to spend meaningful time with patients and being limited by the policies of insurance companies and hospitals that require lots of paperwork and short visit times."

"Too many work hours. Too much administrative work after a 50 hour clinical week. I am a director of a clinical service and have no administrative time. All I do is put out fires and not improve anything."

"I am going to be able replace her. And we are already short two [advanced practitioners]: one retired and the other had to move out of the area for family reasons. This is the perfect storm of The Great Resignation due to the pandemic combined with the aging of primary care physicians retiring and no one coming up from behind to replace them. This a tsunami that will overwhelm our state in the next few years, and overwhelming my practice right now."

"Shortage of healthcare personnel, both practitioners (physicians, PAs NPs) as well as support staff. We are stretched to the limit. My partner is retiring in June 2023 and I don’t know if I am going to be able replace her. And we are already short two [advanced practitioners]: one retired and the other had to move out of the area for family reasons. This is the perfect storm of The Great Resignation due to the pandemic combined with the aging of primary care physicians retiring and no one coming up from behind to replace them. This a tsunami that will overwhelm our state in the next few years, and overwhelming my practice right now."

"The deluge of EMR messages that require 100’s of decisions daily, responses to staff and patients in an often untimely manner, and too many requests for opinions about medical issues. This has taken on a life of its own, and is not sustainable, and is a poor model for delivering care despite the fact that it seems benign enough."
(3) What is one thing Vermont is doing well to attract and retain physicians & PAs?

How do we bring more clinicians to Vermont?

| Quality of Life in State and Progressive Politics: 210 |
| Can’t Think of Anything/Nothing/Not Sure: 100 |
| Loan Repayment /Loan Forgiveness/Scholarships: 27 |
| Great Physician Community/Collegial Relations: 19 |
| Hospital Employment (Salary): 8 |
| Healthcare Access: 4 |
| Support from VDH (especially during the pandemic): 3 |
| Offerings for Clinicians Who Practice in a Rural Setting: 2 |
| Good Work Life Balance: 1 |
| Support from Specialty Society: 1 |
| Opioid Use Disorder Care: 1 |

Recruitment

Out of 292 respondents the survey results show Vermont clinicians love Vermont for its quality of life and supportive politics, but many do not feel that Vermont is investing in physician recruitment.

"Focus on a not-for-profit healthcare industry where physicians can pursue mission-driven practice rather than revenue-driven practice."

"Vermont physicians, PAs and NPs are very active in patient and healthcare advocacy. Vermont is supportive of patient rights, LGBTQ, healthcare access rights (women’s health access, access to LGBTQ care)."

"Connecting with fellow MD’s around key issues that promote practice ideals-building a network that can make positive change."

"Having a robust medical society that actively seeks member’s opinion[s] and advocates for better legislation (firearm safety, access to women’s health) has been a draw."
(4) What is one thing Vermont could be doing better to attract and retain physicians & PAs to practice here?

1. Practice Environment
   a. Better Pay/Benefits: 70
   b. Increase Reimbursement: 19
   c. Reduce Administrative Burden/Obligations of EHR: 18
   d. Support Private Practice Providers/Reduce Control over Clinical Practice: 9
   e. Improve Medical System in terms of becoming more Cost-effective/Provider Friendly: 4
   f. Make DEI a Priority: 3

2. Training & Recruitment
   a. Increase or Expand Loan Repayments/Debt Forgiveness: 37
   b. Address Physician/Nursing Shortage: 6
   c. Increase # of Vermonters Accepted to UVM College of Medicine for Primary Care: 5
   d. Set Up Job Registry: 4
   e. Emphasize Retention: 1
   f. Provide More Scholarships: 1
   g. Attract Residents who want to Stay after Residency: 1
   h. Support Resident Unions: 1

3. State Economic Development
   a. Better Housing/Housing Stipend: 26
   b. Childcare for healthcare providers: 8
   c. Emphasize Quality of Life: 5
   d. Reduce tax burden: 4
   e. Support Job Opportunities for Spouses of Health Care: 3
   f. Improve Public School Systems: 1
   g. Better Family Leave: 1

4. Regulatory Environment
   a. Eliminate/Change the GMCB: 9
   b. Review Hospital Financial Regulation: 1
   c. Continue to help us advocate: 1
VMS Board 2023 Priorities

Recruitment/Workforce Support
- Increase loan repayment and eligibility
- Scholarship/tuition support early in medical education, including for those who may have barriers to attending professional school
- Do more to promote what we are already doing, e.g. existing loan & scholarships, job postings, strong focus on health coverage/access and patient needs, collegiality
- Advocate for statewide economic development needs like housing, childcare

Reduce Administrative Burden
- Expand Gold Card pilots
- Increase prior authorization auto approvals
- Simplified billing, coding, EMRs

Support Professional Satisfaction
- Advocate for any opportunities to maximize time at the bedside, autonomy
- Incentivize time spent teaching and mentoring
- Grow opportunities for networking and socializing, Like a VMS mentoring program, ways to increase early career physician engagement with VMS members, social events

Support Sustainable Practice
- Advocate for increased Medicare/Medicaid rates
- Support training, recruitment, retention of health care workforce at all levels (care management, nurses, etc)
- Continue to advocate for telehealth coverage

For the full 2022 VMS Survey results click