

Wellness Initiative Program and Effect on Pathology Resident Burnout Rate

Kaitlin Collura¹, MD/PhD, Michelle Nagurney¹, MD, Joanna Chan¹, MD

¹Department of Pathology, Anatomy, and Cell Biology, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital

Introduction:

Increasing rates of physician burnout are reported across many medical specialties, including Pathology. In 2014, 52.5% of pathologists experienced symptoms of burnout compared to 37.6% in 2011. Suicide and depression rates in physicians are also higher than the average population. As a result, the ACGME began a campaign, in 2015, to foster resident wellness. The campaign calls for strategies to develop resiliency, identify problems, and promote well-being. While wellness initiatives may not change underlying mental illness, they may mitigate environmental factors that can exacerbate mental illness or suicidal behavior. Here we report results from a recently implemented resident wellness initiative (WI).

Methods:

Wellness Initiative (WI)
Focus Areas:



Targeted Areas of Well-Being:



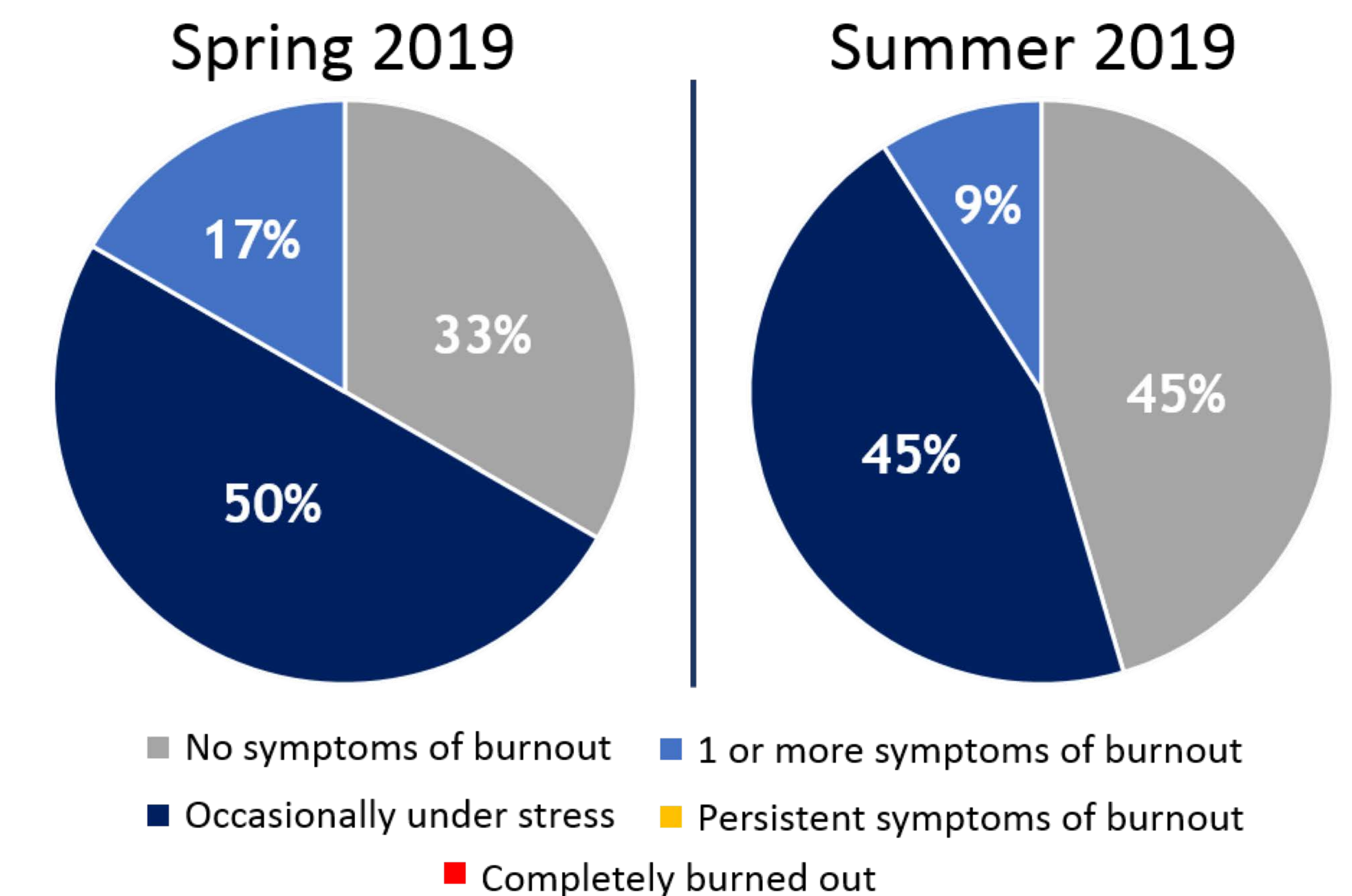
- **Resources:** Emails and flyers highlighted available mental and physical health resources for residents.
- **Activities:** Events included faculty-hosted happy hours, rock climbing, bowling, and an ice cream social.
- **Education:** A wellness retreat educated residents on mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) strategies.
- A wellness needs assessment survey was completed prior to and six months into the WI to assess:
 - Level of burnout experienced by residents
 - Resident perception on the program's culture of wellness

Outcomes:

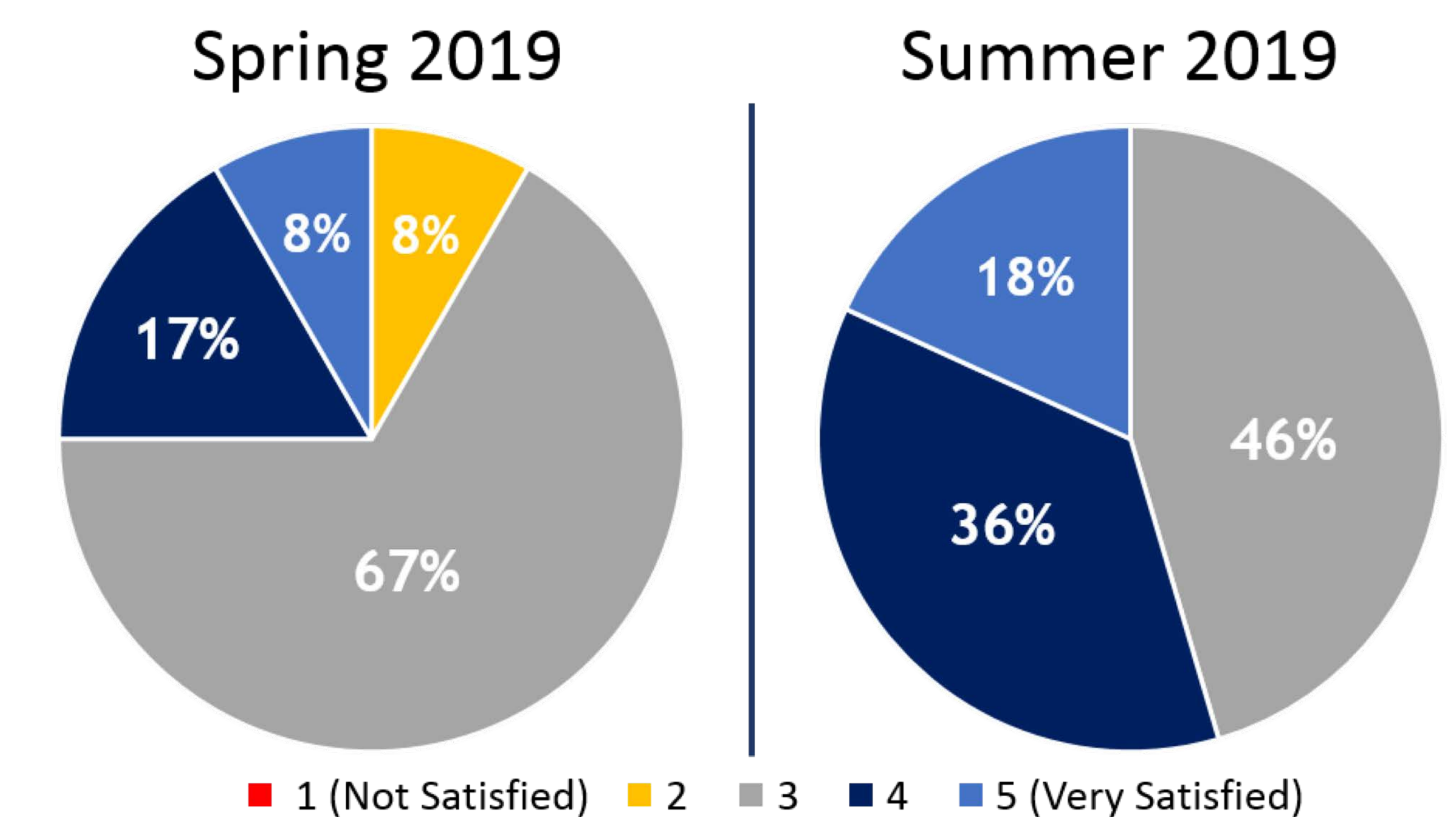
- Reported burnout rate among residents decreased from 17% to 9%.
- Residents who reported the residency program fostered a culture of wellness doubled from 33% to 66%.
- Residents reported improved satisfaction with social activities, professional development, and mentorship.
- However, residents noted continued dissatisfaction with an insufficient emphasis on financial advising and family support.



Resident Level of Burnout:



Satisfaction With Culture of Wellness in Program



Discussion:

Burnout among resident physicians is a widespread issue and is not unique to Pathology. Establishing a resident WI may promote resident well-being. Following implementation of a WI, reported resident burnout rates decreased by nearly half. While survey results show improvement in many areas, focal dissatisfaction persists. Future studies are needed to fully assess the long-term success of WIs on the well-being of residents and to assess the generalizability of these programs to other medical specialties.

Acknowledgements:

We thank Dr. Stephen C. Peiper for generously supporting the resident wellness activities.