

CASE STUDY

UnityPoint Reduces Provider Burnout 44% with Commitment to Comprehensive Well-Being Strategy



UnityPoint Clinic

Executive Summary

With more than 1,200 physicians and advanced practice professionals (APPs), UnityPoint Clinic—a division of UnityPoint Health—offers primary and specialty care services across 370 locations in Iowa, western Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

Facing significant pressure from a major electronic health record (EHR) implementation and rising burnout concerns, UnityPoint leaders partnered with VITAL WorkLife for a comprehensive, clinician-focused solution to support provider mental health and well-being.

The Results Speak Volumes



25% Reduction In
Provider Turnover



44% Decrease In
Self-reported Burnout



72% Provider & APP
Engagement



Challenge

Reducing Clinician Burnout to Attract Top Talent

Leading up to its partnership with VITAL WorkLife, UnityPoint Clinic faced mounting challenges that threatened provider retention and job satisfaction, including:

- 1 Rising Provider Burnout Rates**, with 50% of providers reporting at least one symptom, like reduced performance, irritability, and emotional exhaustion
- 2 Declining Engagement with its Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** among physicians and APPs
- 3 Stress from a New EHR System Implementation**
- 4 Limited Specialized Support** for the unique stressors faced by clinicians

To both attract and retain the most skilled and talented providers, UnityPoint leaders recognized that a strong focus on mental health and well-being was essential.

"We have a growing cohort of younger professionals, many who have different work-life balance expectations than their predecessors," said Patricia Newland, MD, president of UnityPoint Clinic. "From a recruitment perspective, anything we can do to focus on our people helps set us apart."

In a recent [survey conducted by CHG Healthcare](#), more than one-third (35%) of physicians that made a career change since February 2020 said they did so to seek better work-life balance.

For early career physicians, their perspective isn't merely about avoiding burnout. It reflects a holistic view that preserving mental health ultimately results in better patient care.

“We saw the writing on the wall and knew we needed a solution before burnout began to slip further—we wanted to create a culture that truly supported our providers and ensured they had the resources needed to thrive.”

– Dr. Patricia Newland,
President of UnityPoint Clinic

Solution

Tailored Resources for Providers & APPs

UnityPoint Clinic partnered with VITAL WorkLife in 2015, implementing the Provider Well-Being Resources program—a comprehensive solution designed specifically for healthcare organizations.

This solution helps healthcare organizations to measurably improve the mental health of their workforce—matching clinicians and caregivers with tailored resources that enhance well-being.

With VITAL WorkLife, UnityPoint began offering clinicians a range of personalized, healthcare-specific services, including:

Peer Coaching & Support

Confidential, personalized guidance from certified physician and APP coaches who understand the unique challenges of working in healthcare.

WorkLife Concierge

A dedicated virtual personal assistant providing white glove services to help clinicians and their family members free up time with personal needs such as travel logistics, child care coordination, event planning, and more.

Confidential Counseling

Confidential and personalized support from a network of master's and doctoral-level counselors, with Talk to a Counselor Now providing 24/7/365 in-the-moment support.

Assistance with Legal & Financial Stressors

Consultations on budgeting, student loan debt, retirement and estate planning, employment contracts, and more.

“Sometimes clinicians are contemplating leaving medicine altogether due to stress. We need to do whatever we can to wrap our arms around these individuals, so they don’t prematurely leave the profession—or we risk not having enough people to take care of our communities.”

– Dr. Patricia Newland,
President of UnityPoint Clinic

(continued on next page)

Solution (continued)

Dr. Newland emphasized that making well-being services accessible was a crucial first step in addressing clinician burnout. **To ensure a successful rollout, UnityPoint integrated well-being services throughout its operations:**

1 New Hire Onboarding:

All providers learn about VITAL WorkLife during orientation, with annual presentations at new provider retreats.

2 Cultural Awareness:

Leadership continuously promotes the availability of resources, making well-being support a normalized part of the organizational culture. Well-Being Advocates—specially trained employees—champion these resources and build culture from within.

3 Crisis Response:

Immediate connections to support services are provided to physicians and APPs facing traumatic patient outcomes, malpractice claims, and other significant challenges.

4 Performance Improvement:

Providers complete the Maslach Physician Burnout Inventory assessment during performance reviews, with coaching services incorporated into improvement plans when needed.

5 Outcome Tracking:

Leadership groups routinely review utilization data to measure VITAL WorkLife's impact.

“Access is critical. We ensure every provider knows that Provider Well-Being Resources are readily available via phone call or mobile app, and that use of these services is confidential. With VITAL WorkLife, we know we’ll be well supported and that our practitioners will have reliable, consistent resources available when needed. They are a trusted best-practice advisor.”

– **Dr. Patricia Newland,**
President of UnityPoint Clinic

Results

44% Burnout Reduction & 25% Less Turnover

Since implementing VITAL WorkLife's Provider Well-Being Resources program, UnityPoint Clinic has achieved remarkable improvement.

Burnout Reduction:
Providers Reporting Burnout Symptoms Dropped 44%

50% in 2021
28% in 2024

Providers Reporting Moderate-to-Severe Burnout Cases Were Reduced by

55%
from 20% to 9%

Improved Retention:
Provider Turnover was Reduced from 10.1% in 2021 to 7.6% in 2024

25% Reduction In Provider Turnover

Enhanced Engagement:
Provider Participation in VITAL WorkLife Services Grew from 19% in 2019 to 72% in 2022

72% Provider & APP Engagement

Offering tailored resources to its providers helped UnityPoint Clinic emphasize the importance of prioritizing mental health and well-being. But Dr. Newland emphasized that it's only one component of creating an all-encompassing culture of support.

“The best customers of VITAL WorkLife understand that these services aren't a silver bullet. They must be aligned with cultural transformation and strategically embraced from the top down to create and nurture a workplace that fosters health and well-being among its clinicians.”

– Dr. Patricia Newland,
President of UnityPoint Clinic

Conclusion

UnityPoint Clinic's partnership with VITAL WorkLife demonstrates how strategic investment in physician well-being delivers measurable results:



25%
**Reduction
In Provider
Turnover**

And at the end of the day, UnityPoint Clinic believes that placing a stronger focus on clinician mental health and well-being is synonymous with providing better patient care.



44%
**Decrease In
Self-reported
Burnout**

By fostering a culture where well-being support is readily available and normalized, UnityPoint Clinic has created a positive impact across the entire organization. This holistic approach serves as a model for healthcare organizations seeking sustainable environments where providers thrive and patients receive exceptional care.



72%
**Provider & APP
Engagement**

“Moments matter — when we get the right resource to a clinician at the right time, it can be career-saving, even life-extending.”

— Dr. Patricia Newland,
President of UnityPoint Clinic

