

Reducing Employee Burnout

VHA Reduce Employee Burnout and Optimizing Organizational Thriving (REBOOT) Task Force

The **Reduce Employee Burnout and Optimize Organizational Thriving (REBOOT) Task Force** is a national Veterans Health Administration (VHA) initiative addressing burnout and promoting professional fulfillment among employees.

Through conversations with employees, REBOOT is identifying the top contributors to burnout. These include staffing concerns, impacts of COVID-19, pay, recruitment, time off, scheduling flexibilities, the ability to work part time and other challenges.

Based on feedback from employees, REBOOT is developing a set of recommended actions for the Under Secretary for Health (USH) to consider and approve for implementation.

The goal of the REBOOT task force is to help build a workplace where every employee can thrive and find purpose, fulfillment and joy in their work. This will



support every employee’s ability to give their best in serving our Nation’s Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

Listening to Employees

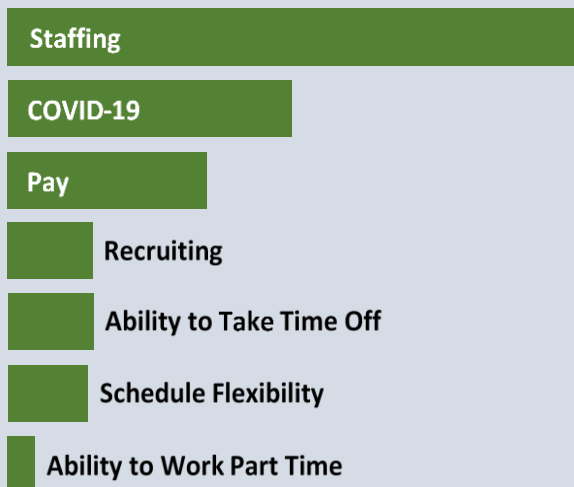
The task force is taking input directly from employees across the VHA system. This feedback provides the foundation for REBOOT’s recommended actions.

The task force has received and responded to more than 700 direct e-mail messages from employees across VHA. Employees have shared their challenges, ideas, and support for the task force and willingness to volunteer and be part of the task force’s work.

REBOOT is hosting multiple focus group sessions where employees throughout VHA can share their challenges, ideas and feedback on potential recommended actions.

The focus group sessions are crucial for ensuring the task force’s recommendations are prioritized, realistic and workable in VHA, which is the largest integrated health care system in the United States with more than 380,000 employees and thousands of locations nationwide.

Top issues for VHA employees



Source: VHA REBOOT Task Force, 2022

Structure

REBOOT is comprised of more than 50 field and headquarter-based employees who care deeply about the crisis of burnout among fellow VHA employees. These employees include representation from clinical, administrative and research staff. They are working apace to determine how to improve the work environment and support the mental health of every employee in VHA.

The task force is comprised of two main workstreams—Organizational Design and Employee Wellbeing. These workstreams each contain individual work groups.

Organizational Design is identifying ways to simplify the work environment. Two workgroups are focused on Systems and Solutions, as well as Recruitment and Retention. The workstream is working on ways to hire employees faster, increase scheduling flexibilities, review compensation, create float teams, update leave policies, bundle and shorten mandatory training, reduce practice inefficiencies and frustrations, and empower frontline employees to have more control over their workday.

Employee Wellbeing is identifying ways to address employee mental health (fatigue, stress, low morale) by creating a culture of well-being. Two workgroups are focused on Supervisor and Leadership Culture, as well as Mental Health and Wellbeing. The workstream is working on ways to promote healthy work-life integration through a whole health approach, supporting employee wellbeing and strengthening VHA's supervisor and leadership culture to support employee wellbeing.

Timeline

REBOOT was established in the fall of 2021, and task force workstreams began their analysis of employee feedback, environmental scans and gap analyses in December 2021. Based on these inputs, preliminary recommended actions and evaluation plans are being developed. Once approved by VHA leadership,

Drivers of burnout in VHA



Unmanageable Workload

Chronically feeling overloaded and unable to manage time effectively



Perceived Lack of Fairness

Feeling taken advantage of or not treated the same as colleagues



Lack of Job Control

Lack of autonomy to make decisions at work and doing tasks that don't provide joy and fulfillment



Low Recognition or Organizational Support

Not getting noticed and/or rewarded by boss or organization for doing good work



Interpersonal Conflict

Hostile or combative relationships between colleagues and/or supervisors



Mismatched Values

Employee has different values and priorities than the organization promotes.

Source: VHA REBOOT Task Force, 2022

recommended actions are expected to begin implementation in June 2022.

Leadership

The task force is being led by three senior VHA leaders located in the field and headquarters:

- **Mark Upton, MD**, Deputy to the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Performing the Delegable Duties of Deputy Under Secretary for Health, VHA
- **Marcia Lysaght, DNP, RN**, Associate Director, Patient Care Services, VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care
- **Jessica Bonjorni, MBA**, Chief, Human Capital Management, VHA