

ABSTRACT: 2016 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

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Project Title: Creation of a Non-traditional Compensation System: How Can We Help You?

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Collaborators: Derek Angus, MD, Nick Vizzoca, MBA, Scott Gunn, MD

Background, Challenge or Opportunity: Physicians currently face increasing clinical obligations, greater competition for research funding, and more requests to support educational activities of academic institutions. These competing demands contribute to physician burnout, which has been identified as a healthcare crisis. To address this problem, institutions are focusing on efforts to support physician wellness and improve job satisfaction. Financial compensation contributes to job satisfaction, but is only one contributor. Other factors may include non-financial compensation, the working environment, and the perception of being a valued member of the team.

Purpose/Objectives: This project has two primary objectives:

- 1) Develop a system to provide non-traditional compensation that demonstrates appreciation of physician efforts and respect for their personal priorities to improve job satisfaction.
- 2) Create a cost-neutral opportunity to reward physicians for their service and contributions to the educational mission of the institution.

Methods/Approach: The first stage of this project will: 1) identify meaningful non-traditional compensation options that would address physician's personal needs and 2) assess current job satisfaction. This stage will be accomplished through focus group interviews and surveys. Focus groups are recruited from a hospital based specialty (critical care medicine) and a traditional specialty (neurology), and sub-groups in each specialty included trainees and junior/mid-level faculty. The survey process will serve to prioritize the non-traditional compensation options for each group and assess job satisfaction. The second stage involves: 1) identification of potential service providers and negotiation regarding costs of non-traditional compensation options, and 2) development of a "concierge" system to assist physicians with selection, coordination, and purchase of their prioritized personalized services at the negotiated discounted rate. The third stage is development of an incentive program allowing physicians to earn credits (Educational Value Units, EVUs) through service to the department's educational mission that can be applied towards either their year-end bonus pay or concierge services.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy:

- Initial focus groups have been completed. Meaningful non-traditional compensation services have been categorized into food, transportation, personal, and referral services.
- The survey regarding job satisfaction and prioritization of services has been developed and is ready for distribution.
- Creation of a preliminary list of services and providers. The process to negotiate costs of the services is under discussion, as is identification of the administrative requirements for the concierge service.
- Development of a system to incentivize participation in the department's education mission. Education related activities will be assigned EVU points that can be earned as part of the bonus incentive plan.
- Evaluation regarding impact of the system will be achieved through follow-up surveys assessing physician's job satisfaction, their perception of their value within the system, perceived worth of concierge services, objective tracking of concierge service use, documentation of EVU accrual, and monitoring whether EVUs are applied to bonus pay or concierge services.

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Background & Opportunity

Physicians face increasing clinical obligations, greater competition for research funding, and more requests to support educational activities of academic institutions. These competing demands contribute to physician burnout, which has been identified as a healthcare crisis (Figures 1 & 2). To address this problem, institutions are focusing on efforts to support physician wellness and improve job satisfaction. Financial compensation contributes to job satisfaction, but is only one contributor. Other factors may include non-financial compensation, the working environment, and the perception of being a valued member of the team.

Purpose & Objectives

This project has two primary objectives:

1. Develop a system to provide non-traditional compensation that demonstrates appreciation of physician efforts and respect for their personal priorities to improve job satisfaction.
2. Create a cost-neutral opportunity to reward physicians for their service and contributions to the educational mission of the institution.

Approach

Stage I:

- ❖ Identify meaningful non-traditional compensation options to address physician's personal needs
- ❖ Assess current job satisfaction.

Methods:

- Interview focus groups from critical care medicine (hospital based specialty) and neurology (traditional specialty).
 - Pre-identified sub-groups include trainees and junior/mid-level faculty
- Surveys to prioritize non-traditional compensation options for each group and assess job satisfaction

Stage II:

- ❖ Identify potential service providers and negotiate of costs of non-traditional compensation options
- ❖ Develop a "concierge" system to assist with selection, coordination, and purchase of services

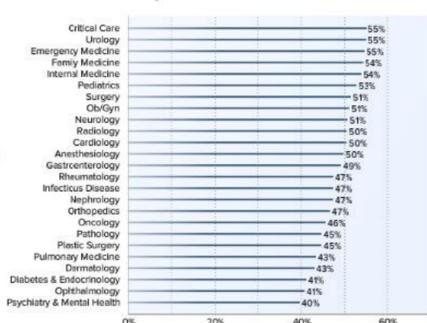
Stage III:

- ❖ Development of an incentive program allowing physicians to earn credits (Educational Value Units, EVUs) through service to the department's educational mission
 - EVUs can be applied towards either year-end bonus pay or concierge services

Outcomes & Evaluation Strategy

- ❖ Initial focus groups have been completed.
 - Categories of compensation services: **food, transportation, personal, and referral services**
- ❖ The survey regarding job satisfaction and prioritization of services has been developed and is ready for distribution
- ❖ A preliminary list of services & providers has been created
 - The process to negotiate costs of services and identify administrative requirements for the concierge service is under discussion.
- ❖ Design a system to incentivize participation in the education mission
 - Education related activities are being assigned EVU points as part of the bonus incentive plan
- ❖ Evaluate impact of the system through:
 - Follow-up surveys assessing job satisfaction, perception of value within the system, and perceived worth of concierge services
 - Objective tracking of concierge service use
 - Documentation of EVU accrual
 - Monitoring whether EVUs are applied to bonus pay or concierge services.

Which Physicians Are Most Burned Out?



Burnout by Gender

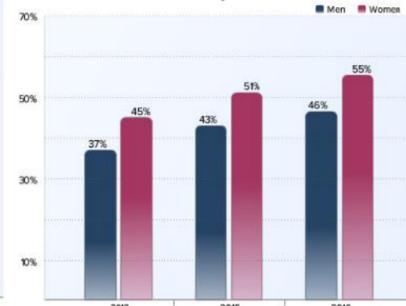
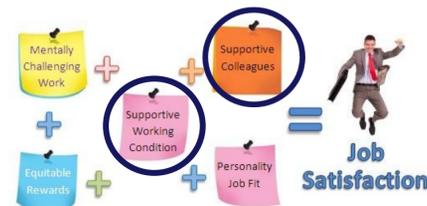


Figure 1

Figure 2

Reference: Medscape Lifestyle Report 2016: Bias and Burnout, Jan 13, 2016



Discussion & Impact

- ❖ Enthusiasm for the project among faculty and fellows is high
- ❖ Work on this project has introduced me to a number of colleagues within the institution who are focused on improving the work environment and faculty wellness
- ❖ Departmental leadership is concerned about faculty satisfaction and are open to new ideas to help with retention and recruitment.

Next Steps

- ❖ Expand my knowledge regarding how other industries developed and introduced non-monetary compensation strategies into their system
- ❖ Facilitate collaboration among different groups in the institution to share resources in efforts to address wellness and job satisfaction

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