

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Dr. Sarah Hall gets our Physician Wellness #GOAT!

Dr. Sarah Hall is nominated by a colleague for the physician wellness #GOAT recognition based on several physician wellness initiatives that she spearheaded as Deputy Head, Professional Affairs, Department of Pediatrics, Cumming School of Medicine:

- Created an anonymous department reporting system so a member can confidentially report concerns in the areas of wellness and safe learning and working environment.
- Added a monthly department newsletter feature related to wellness.
- Leads and brings in CME and speakers to educate and empower department leaders around how to be leaders and role models for physician wellness.
- Benchmarks where the department is and where they want to be by collecting data and metrics to measure and track wellness in the department.

When we asked Dr. Hall to describe one of the initiatives listed by her colleague, this is what she shared with us.

Literature has demonstrated that the availability of an anonymous reporting tool contributes to a psychologically safe and healthy work environment. We developed an anonymous tool for anyone to report untoward encounters in the workplace. A QR code is located at the top of our weekly department bulletin, reminding colleagues to report events in the workplace that feel unsafe, unsupportive, or disrespectful, particularly bullying, abuse, harassment, and discrimination. As leaders in our department, we are committed to supporting an environment that allows for all to do their best work and achieve their greatest potential.

"I am committed to creating a work environment that is supportive of all department members, allowing colleagues to achieve their greatest potential and to provide the best care they can to our pediatric patients."

- Dr. Sarah Hall



Dr. Sarah Hall

What are your professional roles?

1. Deputy Head, Professional Affairs, Department of Pediatrics, Cumming School of Medicine
2. Medical Lead, Virtual Health, Alberta Health Services
3. Clinical Associate Professor, Cumming School of Medicine
4. Hospital Pediatrician, Alberta Children's Hospital
5. Member of Board of Directors, Alberta Medical Association
6. Member of Board of Directors, Calgary Health Foundation

Please choose one of your roles above and tell us what your colleagues can expect from you in that role.

As the Deputy Head, Professional Affairs, I am committed to creating a work environment that is supportive of all department members, allowing colleagues to achieve their greatest potential and to provide the best care they can to our pediatric patients. We aim to do this using the AMA [Healthy Working Environment Framework](#) to ensure we approach this issue in a multi-pronged manner: through ensuring psychosocial wellness and safety, facilitating leadership development and promotion amongst colleagues and through ensuring an equitable, diverse, and inclusive space for innovation and excellence.

For you, what three words describe the current state of physician wellness in Alberta?

1. stigma
2. under-appreciation
3. under-recognition

What three words describe your goals related to physician wellness in Alberta?

1. education
2. collaboration
3. support

As a physician yourself, what is something you do intentionally to take care of your mental health?

I ensure I have quality time with my family and friends and ensure I maintain a lifestyle that promotes exercise and healthy habits.

What is your cue that an area of your own wellness needs your attention?

When I start to feel impatient or frustrated, this is usually a sign that I am fatigued and need a break.

What area of your wellness do you find the most challenging to look after?

Regular sleep is challenging for me. This is partly because I work night shifts but also because of the many demands on my time (work, family, social commitments).

How is this challenge different now than it was earlier in your career?

Now, I have a young family who needs me to be present for them. Earlier in my career, it was easier to juggle multiple demands but as my kids get older, our family needs time that is protected from competing demands.

What would be on the script you write for your colleague's wellness?

1 x solution to an organizational cause contributing to compromised wellness; repeats: as many as needed.

What sustains you? Where do you find meaning in your work?

I work with incredible colleagues that provide me with support and friendship. I am fueled by the commitment to support my colleagues to do the amazing work they do in caring for children.

What has been positive for you over the last year? Has there been a silver lining in the pandemic for you?

The pandemic has started a reconsideration of values and practices that previously were unquestioned. I see an opportunity to refresh and restructure society into one that promotes kindness, compassion, and inclusion of all.

Looking to the future, what gives you hope?

The upcoming generations are so knowledgeable in the ways of equity, diversity and inclusion. They are empowered to speak up for their values and are ready to be upstanders for others. Parenting children today and working closely with medical trainees provides me with hope for the future!

What one thing do you want your colleagues to know?

Addressing physician wellness is not a sign of weakness or lack of resilience. In general, physicians are extremely resilient. Addressing physician wellness is a sign of insight and recognition that our work is hard. We can start to support one another once discussions about physician wellness is not tied to weakness.

With respect to physician wellness, who or what is your Greatest of All Time (#GOAT) and why?

The work of the Alberta Medical Association is my #GOAT. The Healthy Working Environment Framework has been such a helpful description of what we need to do our best work for our patients. Thank you, AMA!

And now for fun, tell us about your preference in each of the following pairs:

- Dog or cat: dog
- Twitter or Instagram: Instagram
- Sweet or salty: sweet
- Introvert or extrovert: extrovert
- Yoga or Zumba: yoga
- Text or call: text
- Summer or winter: summer
- Journal or meditate: journal
- Sing or dance: dance
- While walking, music or podcasts: podcasts

A graphic with a dark blue background and a yellow curved bottom. On the left is a large, light blue stylized figure of a person with arms outstretched. In the center, the text "We are here with you and for you." is written in yellow and white. On the right, the text "Call AMA's Physician and Family Support Program" is in white, followed by the phone number "1.877.767.4637" in yellow and "24 hours a day" in white. At the bottom right is a white logo of three stylized figures holding hands, with the letters "pfsp" in blue below it.

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Need help now? Call PFSP.