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Survey Says 66% Of California Independent Physicians Have Optimistic Outlook, While COVID-19 Pandemic Spurred Re-evaluation of Their Work Lives

*47% of physician respondents used telehealth for the first time
46% see telehealth as “a staple” of their practices in the future*

Oakland, CA (June 15, 2021) – While clinician burnout following the COVID-19 pandemic has been widely documented, a recent survey of independent physicians across California, conducted by [Altais](#), in partnership with [California Medical Association](#) and [Brown & Toland Physicians](#), indicates that, in California, the news is not all bad:

- 66% of respondents characterized as “very or somewhat optimistic” their general outlook and attitude looking to the future, vs. 20% who feel “very or somewhat pessimistic.”
- 65% reported experiencing “excellent or good” overall physical and mental health right now, vs. 14% reporting “fair or poor” overall health.

At the same time, the survey made clear that the last 16 months of the pandemic have had an impact on how providers view their professional choices:

- 56% of respondents reported that a primary source of work-related stress during the pandemic was the overall financial performance of their practice; 42% named reduced patient visits as a primary stressor.
- 44% responded that the pandemic “changed how I think about work-life balance.”
- 35% reported that the pandemic “confirmed my commitment to independent practice,” while 25% said they “question my commitment to independent practice.”
- 35% reported that the pandemic “confirmed my commitment to practicing medicine,” while only 14% say they question that commitment.

Telehealth and other technologies played a significant role in helping physicians and patients navigate the pandemic, and they appear to be a permanent part of healthcare’s future.

Respondents confirmed this shift as follows:

- 30% responded that the past year “made me want to use technology more to see my patients.”

- 47% had not previously used telehealth to see patients.
- 39% responded that telehealth “played a crucial role in my ability to continue to care for patients.”
- 46% see telehealth as “a staple” of future practice.
4% reported that telehealth “did not work for my practice”

According to [Medscape’s 2021 Physician Burnout & Suicide Report](#), 42% of physicians reported feeling burnout in 2020. “We’ve known about the challenge of physician burnout for a long time,” said **Dr. Jeff Bailet**, CEO of Altais. “Pressures are particularly keen for independent physicians, which is why Altais’ mission is to create business systems and solutions specifically for them. Physician gratification is the critical fourth element of healthcare’s quadruple aim. We’re encouraged by the survey respondents’ increased optimism and renewed commitment to the practice of medicine. At the same time, we hear their need for more support loud and clear.”

Survey methodology and respondents

The survey was conducted online, shared via email with 9,564 independent physicians throughout California, in April and May 2021. About the 318 respondents:

- Geographic distribution: 51% are located in the greater San Francisco Bay Area; 18% in the greater Los Angeles area; 11% in greater San Diego and 20% distributed throughout the rest of the state.
- Type of medical practice: 58% are a specialty practice; 42% are primary care.
- Size of practice: 83% are in small/solo practice (fewer than 10 practitioners).

About Altais

Altais is a healthcare services company that helps physicians and the clinical community maximize the health and well-being of their patients in an affordable and sustainable way. Altais has two divisions. Altais Clinical Services offers a range of affiliation and employment models for physicians, and high-quality, affordable care for patients. Altais Health offers a broad platform of clinical support tools and technology, along with high-touch support. Altais seeks to enhance the vibrancy of physician practice and strengthen the heart of medicine – physicians connecting with patients and providing personalized, high-quality care. For more information about Altais, please visit www.altais.com.

Editors, please note: Photos and interviews are available by contacting Robin Carr at (415) 971-3991 or Altais@landispr.com.

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