

To: Our Physician and Nurse Colleagues

From: Program Co-chairs* – Camille Adair, RN, Bill Norcross, MD, and Sam Slishman, MD

Please join us in San Luis Obispo for a weekend of collegiality and good will, and what we hope will be one of the best 2 ½ day conferences you've ever attended.

Though other clinicians and interested persons, including administrators, are welcome to attend, it's important that *you* know this symposium was thoughtfully designed especially for you...the doctors and nurses who work together caring for patients, every single hour of every single day. You intimately know the challenges and uphill battles clinicians face: from frustrations with EHRs and pre-authorizations, to staffing shortages, to loss of autonomy, to Press Ganey scores, to... to... to...

'Burnout' vs 'Moral Injury':

Does it matter what we call it? Yes, we think it does. The literature and research over the past 10-15 years has focused on the rampant increase in symptoms of burnout and the (perceived) need for greater clinician resilience. In July 2018, a seismic shift in thinking began with Drs. Simon Talbot and Wendy Dean's article in STAT: [Physicians aren't 'burning out.' They're suffering from moral injury.](#) In only months, that shift has resulted in animated conversations and articles—and a clarion call—around the world.

On April 25, BMJ published [Sixty seconds on . . . moral injury](#), to summarize the message of Andrew Goddard, president of the Royal College of Physicians, at RCP's annual conference that day in England. *"What we call burnout—that sense of despair, hopelessness, and loss of joy—is not a failure of the individual. It is a failure of the environment they work in, the culture of the workplace, the workload imposed on them."* Goddard went on: *"Yes, we all can improve the working lives of those around us but until we sort out the workplace we will all continue to be 'injured by it.' How we treat each other and work together impacts directly on our patients."*



This painting, 'Toward the Light,' is being used to illuminate our vision and mission, with the enthusiastic permission of artist, Annie Hoffman (wife of one of our 'master' speakers, Dr. Jerome Hoffman). It captures the beauty of California's Central Coast and reminds us to turn away from the darkness and look toward the light.

This is the purpose of our conference: To gather, learn, and have the time and space to talk to each other about reclaiming our agency and taking back our seat at the table. Whether we think of ourselves as leaders or not, as practicing clinicians, we are leaders (starting with our own teams). This innovative, cutting-edge program easily falls under the banner of leadership training.

You will be reminded of the words and high ideals of our patron saints, Sir William Osler and Florence Nightingale. They are as inspiring and relevant today as they were more than a century ago. Our uninvited companions for far too long—cynicism, hopelessness, and that feeling of 'being stuck'—will be banished. You will rediscover your strength and fortitude that had been shrouded in darkness. You will now be facing toward the light.

After reconnecting with the soul of our professions and hanging out and having fun with colleagues, we will return to work on Monday energized, and with a different mindset that won't dissipate after the umpteenth-hundred click at the computer. We will *know* we are not alone, that we are part of a burgeoning cadre of colleagues—scattered near and far—who also believe and know change is happening—*because we are prepared to make it happen!* We are resilient, and we're taking back our power!

You will become leaders in your hospitals and care settings who will recruit others, because having

been inspired and reminded why you chose medicine—or why it chose you—you will be able to remind and inspire colleagues. You will become clinician advocates and activists in the workplace to help identify solutions that will contribute to righting the system.

We are dedicated professionals who are not afraid of long hours and hard work. Heck, we were trained to work long and hard! We were *not* trained to be victims or to have our values, integrity, and meaning and purpose co-opted by others. We are 4.6 million strong. Together we can make a difference. We just have to believe—and know—we can.

Education + Recreation + Inspiration + Conversation + Community + Collaboration = Renewal + Fun!

Don't miss this extraordinary event. Hope to see you in August!

***Be sure to listen to [Bill Norcross's heartfelt words](#) and [read those of the Faculty](#)**