Physician Wellness during the COVID-19 Health Emergency

As the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic continues to unfold and confirmed positive cases in the United States increase, obstetrician-gynecologists (ob-gyns) are on the front lines caring for patients. Financial uncertainties, longer hours caring for sick patients, changing and adapting to new practice structures and guidelines to cut down on transmission, shortages of necessary medical equipment, and adapting to the constant and ever-changing clinical environment have added increased stress to ob-gyns. Further, physicians are faced with increased worry for family, friends, and colleagues that puts additional physical, mental, and emotional stress on themselves. Below, find tips and resources that will help with your mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing during this emergency health crisis.

Ensure your basic needs are being met.

• Have you been eating regular, healthy meals and staying adequately hydrated?
• Are you regularly getting a full night of restful sleep?
• Have you been able to continue maintaining your normal exercise routine, including time spent outdoors?
• If you practice mindfulness and meditation, are you prioritizing the continuation of that practice?

Maintain communication with loved ones and colleagues. While maintaining the recommended social distancing practices, you can still regularly check in with your loved ones. Carve out time in your homes to spend quality time with family members each day. Utilize video technology on your phones and computers to maintain communication with loved ones living outside your home. Check in with your colleagues throughout your workday and shifts to ensure they are okay.

Utilize self check-ins to ensure that your health and your wellbeing are not deteriorating. Monitor yourself for any symptoms of increased stress and burnout. Be aware and mindful to ensure you are not falling into using poor coping strategies. If you find that you are experiencing these changes in your mental health and wellbeing, reach out to your loved ones, your colleagues, or a professional for help.

For additional resources, toolkits, and guidance regarding your wellbeing, please visit the following:

• AMA: Caring for our Caregivers during COVID-19 – provides strategies for health systems and leadership that would support physicians and HCPs during COVID-19.
• Stanford Medicine WellMD Center – provides links to wellness quizzes and resources for exercises, burnout, trauma stress, and mindfulness training tailored for physicians.
• NAM: Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience – provides a comprehensive list of resources on how to support the well-being of physicians and other health care clinicians during COVID-19.

Finally, know that you can connect with your ACOG Member colleagues at anytime utilizing the ACOG Engage feature. Engage with your ACOG online community to connect and share tips and ideas for ways you can support your personal wellbeing and ways you can help to assist your colleagues.

Please check back as ACOG continues to develop wellness resources for you!