Improving Wellbeing and Mental Health

Merck Animal Health
2023 Veterinary Wellbeing Study
Agenda

1. KEY FINDINGS
   - Background
   - Key Findings
   - Job Satisfaction Measures
   - Attitudes Toward the Profession

2. DETAILED FINDINGS
   - Wellbeing
   - Mental Health
   - Burnout

3. ACTION STEPS
   - What Veterinarians and Staff Can Do to Improve Wellbeing
   - What Employers Can Do to Improve Wellbeing

4. CONCLUSIONS/Q&A
Goals:

1. Definitively quantify the prevalence of mental illness and stress in the veterinary profession
2. Compare to previous studies and general US population

Objectives:

1. Determine levels of mental health, wellbeing, and burnout using standardized tools with a representative sample of veterinarians
2. Identify at-risk segments and contributing factors
3. Suggest organizational and personal remedies and interventions if needed
Six Major Studies

2017 Veterinarian Wellbeing Study
2019 Veterinarian Wellbeing Study II
2021 Veterinarian Wellbeing Study III
  Veterinary Team Wellbeing Study
2023 Veterinarian Wellbeing Study IV
  Veterinary Team Wellbeing Study II
About the Study

- **4th biennial study**
- **Large scale:** 4,700 respondents
- **Representative:** Weighted by age, gender, region of US
- **Margin of error at 95% confidence interval:** +/- 1.4%
Respondent Profile

**Age**

- 2023 (n=4622)
- 18% 18-34
- 24% 35-44
- 24% 45-54
- 23% 55-64
- 11% 65+

**Generation**

- 25% Baby Boomers (1946-1964)
- 36% Gen X (1965-1979)
- 34% Millennials (1980-1994)
- 5% Gen Z (1995-2005)

**Race/Ethnicity**

- White (n=4603) 93%
- Asian 3%
- Black or African American 2%
- Native American, Alaska native 1%
- Middle Eastern 0%
- Pacific Islander, Hawaiian 0%
- Other 3%

**Gender**

- Female 74%
- Male 24%
- Other/Declined 1%

*Note: Responses to this question are non-exclusive.*

*Base: All Respondents (n=4622)*
Respondent Profile – Geographical Representation

*Note: Data on this slide was unweighted.

SC5. In what state were you located?
SC6. How would you characterize your practice – as mostly serving urban, suburban, or rural clients?

**Base: All Respondents (n=4636)**
Respondent Profile – Type of Employment

Type of Veterinarian

- Practitioner: 85% (2023), 85% (2021), 81% (2019), 79% (2017)
- Non-practitioner: 15% (2023), 15% (2021), 19% (2019), 21% (2017)

Animals Seen at Practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Companion Animal</th>
<th>Food Animal</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Equine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023 (n=3799)</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 (n=2111)</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 (n=2314)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>7%†</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (n=2805)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SC3. How would you best describe the practice or other employer at which you work?
Base: Practicing Veterinarians

Type of Employment*

- Associate: 45% (2023), 46% (2021), 44% (2019), 45% (2017)
- Owner (co-owner): 27% (2023), 29% (2021), 29% (2019), 26% (2017)
- Other: 28% (2023), 25% (2021), 29% (2019), 29% (2017)

Practice Ownership Type*

- Private: 63% (2023), 63% (2021), 62% (2019), 64% (2017)
- Corporate: 37% (2023), 37% (2021), 38% (2019), 36% (2017)

Type of Primary Practice*

- General Practice: 77% (2023), 78% (2021), 77% (2019), 78% (2017)
- Specialty Practice: 7% (2023), 7% (2021), 7% (2019), 7% (2017)
- Mobile Practice: 3% (2023), 3% (2021), 3% (2019), 3% (2017)
- Emergency Practice: 5% (2023), 5% (2021), 5% (2019), 5% (2017)
- Other: 8% (2023), 8% (2021), 8% (2019), 8% (2017)

SC4A. Please classify the ownership of the practice at which you work.
Base: Practicing Veterinarians (n=3799)

Other Includes:
Relief, Consultants, Medical Directors, Professors, Executives, Industry Roles, Managers, Academic Clinicians, Researchers in addition to some other roles. They are all in small percents and not broken out individually here.

SC2. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?
Base: All Respondents

*Note: Data on this chart was unweighted.
†Note: In 2019 there was a boosted sample of Food Animal vets to examine the subgroup in greater detail.
1. Key Findings
The Reality Is More Positive Than Perception
Many Veterinarians Satisfied With Their Careers, but Perceive Many in Industry as Dissatisfied

74% of respondents indicate they are somewhat or extremely satisfied with their careers

DEMA. How satisfied are you with your career overall in veterinary medicine?
DEMB. How satisfied do you think veterinarians, in general, are with their careers in veterinary medicine?
Base: All Respondents
Job Satisfaction Improves With Age

More than 50% of veterinarians over 45 are very/extremely satisfied with their jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Extremely satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Not too satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] 18-34 (n=810)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[B] 35-44 (n=1125)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[C] 45-54 (n=1117)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[D] 55-64 (n=1066)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[E] 65+ (n=501)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WB6. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?
Base: All Respondents
Veterinary Wellbeing Study

Vets Have Higher Job Satisfaction Than General Population

92% of respondents say they take pride in their work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2023 USA Vets</th>
<th>2022 General Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am invested in my work and take pride in doing a good job</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work makes a positive contribution to other people’s lives</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a warm, friendly, and supportive relationship with my coworkers</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WB6. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?

Base: All Respondents
Incomes Increasing

Mean Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Associates</th>
<th>Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$152,086</td>
<td>$87,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$153,740</td>
<td>$102,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$190,122</td>
<td>$118,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>$195,796</td>
<td>$124,078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Respondents
Most Likely Reason for Leaving the Profession? Retirement

- Retirement is likely the key reason for leaving
- Less than 2.5% of veterinarians under the age of 55 are very likely to leave the profession within the next two years

**Likelihood to Leave the Overall Veterinary Field**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] &lt;35 (n=698)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[B] 35-44 (n=927)</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[C] 45-54 (n=892)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[D] 55-64 (n=859)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[E] 65+ (n=398)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEM20. How likely were you to leave veterinary medicine within two years?
Base: Practicing Veterinarians only
Positive Findings Indicate Thriving Profession

- 92% surveyed are invested and take pride in their work
- 74% satisfied with their career
- Work-life balance improves as work hours decrease
- Incomes going up
- Positive attitude toward career
2. Detailed Findings
Wellbeing, Burnout, and Mental Health
3 Major Measures

Wellbeing
how people view their welfare level in terms of happiness, health, prosperity, and resources

Burnout
state of exhaustion (physical, mental, and emotional) resulting from prolonged stress

Mental health
condition of an individual's mental and emotional state, including prevalence or absence of serious psychological distress
Veterinarian Wellbeing Consistent With Non-Vets

More than 53% of respondents say they have a high level of wellbeing and are flourishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Question</th>
<th>Wellbeing Scale and Points System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination of wellbeing uses a series of three questions:</td>
<td>Responses were indexed on a 11-point scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How satisfied were you with your life as a whole?</td>
<td>Flourishing - 7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On a 10-step ladder, on which step do you feel you personally stand at the present time (0 = worst; 10 = best possible)</td>
<td>Getting By - 4-6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. On a 5-point scale, indicate agreement or disagreement with: “In most cases my life was close to ideal”</td>
<td>Suffering - 0-3.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of team flourishing (high wellbeing)</th>
<th>% of team getting by (medium wellbeing)</th>
<th>% of team suffering (low wellbeing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[A] 2023 Vets (n=4636)
More Experience Means Higher Wellbeing

More than 50% of veterinarians over 45 are flourishing in their careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Flourishing</th>
<th>Getting By</th>
<th>Suffering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34 (n=811)</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 (n=1126)</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 (n=1117)</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64 (n=1066)</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ (n=502)</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents
Student Debt Affects Wellbeing

More than 60% of respondents with no student debt say they are flourishing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debt Category</th>
<th>Flourishing (%)</th>
<th>Getting By (%)</th>
<th>Suffering (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] None (n=2815)</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[B] Less than $50,000 (n=406)</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[C] $50,000-$99,999 (n=318)</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[D] $100,000-$199,999 (n=501)</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[E] $200,000-$299,999 (n=304)</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[F] $300,000+ (n=287)</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents

Wellbeing
A New Comprehensive Tool to Measure Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAT-12 Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. (Exhaustion) At work, I feel mentally exhausted.</td>
<td>5 – Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (Exhaustion) After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy.</td>
<td>4 – Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Exhaustion) At work, I feel physically exhausted.</td>
<td>3 – Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (Mental Distance) I struggle to find any enthusiasm for my work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (Mental Distance) I feel a strong aversion toward my job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (Mental Distance) I’m cynical about what my work means to others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (Cognitive Impairment) At work, I have trouble staying focused.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. (Cognitive Impairment) When I’m working, I have trouble concentrating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (Cognitive Impairment) I make mistakes in my work because I have my mind on other things.</td>
<td>2 – Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. (Emotional Impairment) At work, I feel unable to control my emotions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. (Emotional Impairment) I do not recognize myself in the way I react emotionally at work.</td>
<td>1 – Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. (Emotional Impairment) At work, I may overreact unintentionally.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Lower Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>Higher Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Impairment</th>
<th>Lower Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>Higher Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Impairment</th>
<th>Lower Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>Higher Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhaustion</th>
<th>Lower Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>Higher Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Distance</th>
<th>Lower Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>Higher Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most Veterinarians Experience Low to Medium Burnout

Exhaustion is principal type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Low Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>High Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Impairment</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Impairment</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Distance</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

Base: All Respondents
Overall Burnout in Veterinarians Similar to General Population

Veterinarians experience a similar level of burnout as the general population, but higher levels of exhaustion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Exhaustion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[A] 2023 Vets (n=4636)</td>
<td>[B] USA General Population (n=30392)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Burnout (&lt;3)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Burnout (&gt;=3)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*General population data are from the 2023 McKinsey Health Institute Employee Holistic Health Survey.

Q801. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you. Base: All Respondents
Food Animal Vets Experience Less Burnout

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

Base: All Respondents

- Low Burnout (1-1.99)
- Medium Burnout (2-2.99)
- High Burnout (3-3.99)
- Very High Burnout (4-5)

Mean

[A] Companion Animal (n=3424)
- Low Burnout: 23%
- Medium Burnout: 57%
- High Burnout: 19%
- Very High Burnout: 1%

Mean: 2.4

[B] Food Animal (n=82)
- Low Burnout: 38%
- Medium Burnout: 54%
- High Burnout: 8%

Mean: 2.2

[C] Mixed (n=250)
- Low Burnout: 31%
- Medium Burnout: 55%
- High Burnout: 13%

Mean: 2.3

[D] Equine (n=175)
- Low Burnout: 26%
- Medium Burnout: 59%
- High Burnout: 13%

Mean: 2.3

[E] Non-practitioner (n=701)
- Low Burnout: 31%
- Medium Burnout: 54%
- High Burnout: 13%

Mean: 2.3
Some Variation by Role in Practice

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

Base: All Respondents

![Bar chart showing burnout variation by role](chart.png)

Mean

[A] Associate (n=2091)
- Low Burnout (1-1.99): 19%
- Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 58%
- High Burnout (3-3.99): 22%
- Very High Burnout (4-5): 1%

[B] Relief (n=356)
- Low Burnout (1-1.99): 23%
- Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 58%
- High Burnout (3-3.99): 18%
- Very High Burnout (4-5): 1%

[C] Owner/Co-Owner (n=1231)
- Low Burnout (1-1.99): 32%
- Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 56%
- High Burnout (3-3.99): 11%
- Very High Burnout (4-5): 0%

[D] Corporate Medical Director (n=272)
- Low Burnout (1-1.99): 24%
- Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 56%
- High Burnout (3-3.99): 17%
- Very High Burnout (4-5): 4%

- Low Burnout (1-1.99)
- Medium Burnout (2-2.99)
- High Burnout (3-3.99)
- Very High Burnout (4-5)
### Serious Psychological Distress Measured by Kessler 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kessler 6 Question</th>
<th>Kessler 6 Scale and Points System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel each of the following…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• nervous</td>
<td>All of the time – 4 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• hopeless</td>
<td>Most of the time – 3 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• so sad nothing could cheer you up</td>
<td>Some of the time – 2 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• worthless</td>
<td>A little of the time – 1 Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• restless or fidgety</td>
<td>None of the time – 0 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• that everything was an effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of team <strong>suffering</strong> from serious psychological distress</th>
<th>% of team <strong>not suffering</strong> from serious psychological distress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] 2023 Vets (n=4636) 10.0%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Distressed
- Not Distressed
Serious Psychological Distress Affects More Younger Vets

- 90% in the profession are not distressed
- Opportunity to offer more support for younger professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Distressed</th>
<th>Not Distressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] 18-34 (n=811)</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[B] 35-44 (n=1126)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[C] 45-54 (n=1117)</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[D] 55-64 (n=1066)</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[E] 65+ (n=502)</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6. 
Base: All Respondents
Big Picture: Veterinarians Are People Too

Many wellbeing and mental health measures were similar to non-veterinarians.

Mid-to-late career professionals are happier, less stressed, and less burned out.

Early career veterinarians are more vulnerable.
3. Action Steps
Focus on Prevention, Not Just Diagnosis

**Personal**
- Work-life balance
- Active social life
- Positive Coping Mechanism
- Financial advisors

**Practice**
- Reduce stigma through discussion
- Foster healthy culture
- EAP
- Health insurance coverage
Progress: 2017-2023

Increase in Those Seeking Treatment
13% → 25%

Mental Health Insurance Coverage
44% → 52%

Employee Assistance Programs
21% → 38%
How to Manage Wellbeing, Burnout, and Distress
Recognizing Impact of Personality and Debt

- No. 1 predictor of low wellbeing, high burnout, and serious psychological distress is neuroticism
- Experiences high levels of stress, anxiety, and dramatic shifts in mood
- Student debt also a significant contributor

Respondents receive a score on each personality trait. Those with particularly strong scores for a given trait can be identified and compared.
Predictors of High Wellbeing, Low Burnout, and Less Distress

- Work-life balance
  - Spending time with family and friends
  - Healthy activities, i.e., exercise, reading, travel, etc.

- Effective coping mechanisms

- Clinic culture
Work Schedules Improving

- Fewer veterinarians worked extended hours in 2023 compared with other years.
- In 2023, the percentage of veterinarians working on evenings, weekends, and holidays went down, following the overall trend for hours being worked.

### Hours Worked Per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>0-30 Hours</th>
<th>31-45 Hours</th>
<th>46+ Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023 Vets</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 Vets</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Vets</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Vets</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Median**

- 2023 Vets: 40 hours
- 2021 Vets: 43 hours
- 2019 Vets: 45 hours
- 2017 Vets: 43 hours

**DEM6A.** Approximately how many hours per week do you work in veterinary practice?
**Base:** All Respondents
Those With Lower Burnout Spend More Time With Family

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

**Base:** All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spend time with family</th>
<th>Low Burnout (1-1.99)</th>
<th>Medium Burnout (2-2.99)</th>
<th>High Burnout (3-3.99)</th>
<th>Very High Burnout (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] Never (n=70)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[B] Seldom (n=618)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[C] Sometimes (n=1524)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[D] Frequently (n=2390)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean

- [A] Never: 2.7
- [B] Seldom: 2.7
- [C] Sometimes: 2.5
- [D] Frequently: 2.2
Those With Lower Burnout Spend More Time With Friends

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

**Base:** All Respondents

- **E** Never (n=194)
  - Low Burnout (1-1.99): 11%
  - Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 41%
  - High Burnout (3-3.99): 43%
  - Very High Burnout (4-5): 4%
  - Mean: 2.8

- **F** Seldom (n=1384)
  - Low Burnout (1-1.99): 17%
  - Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 60%
  - High Burnout (3-3.99): 21%
  - Very High Burnout (4-5): 2%
  - Mean: 2.5

- **G** Sometimes (n=2144)
  - Low Burnout (1-1.99): 27%
  - Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 57%
  - High Burnout (3-3.99): 15%
  - Very High Burnout (4-5): 1%
  - Mean: 2.3

- **H** Frequently (n=897)
  - Low Burnout (1-1.99): 37%
  - Medium Burnout (2-2.99): 53%
  - High Burnout (3-3.99): 10%
  - Very High Burnout (4-5): 1%
  - Mean: 2.2
Those Lower in Burnout Exercise More Often

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

**Base:** All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise Level</th>
<th>Never (n=297)</th>
<th>Seldom (n=1036)</th>
<th>Sometimes (n=1398)</th>
<th>Frequently (n=1878)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Burnout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Burnout</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Burnout</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High Burnout</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean:
- [A] Never: 2% 2.7
- [B] Seldom: 2% 2.5
- [C] Sometimes: 1% 2.4
- [D] Frequently: 1% 2.3
Those Who Sleep 8 Hours Per Night Have Lower Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sleep 8 hours</th>
<th>Never (n=558)</th>
<th>Seldom (n=1230)</th>
<th>Sometimes (n=1371)</th>
<th>Frequently (n=1463)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean**

- **3%** 2.6
- **1%** 2.5
- **1%** 2.4
- **1%** 2.3

QBO1. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience it. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

*Base: All Respondents*
Healthy Coping Methods Reduce Distress

75% of respondents agree that having healthy coping strategies helps alleviate anxiety.

“**I have a healthy method for dealing with stress in my life**”

<p>|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[A] 2023 Vets</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n=4636)        |

MH15. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have a healthy method for dealing with stress in my life.

**Base:** All Respondents

**Effective**
- I take comfort in the belief that problems will work themselves out.
- I accept the situation without getting caught up in the emotions.
- I distract myself with TV, computer games,...
- I take care of problems that cause stress.
- I make changes to my life to reduce stress.

**Not Effective**
- I try to forget about it and hope it would go away.
Financial Planners Help Deal With Debt

Do you have a personal financial planner/advisor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, I have a Financial Planner</th>
<th>No, I don't have a Financial Planner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEM15. Do you have a personal financial planner/advisor?
Base: All Respondents
**Good News: More and More Vets Receiving Counseling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Distressed</th>
<th>Not Distressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes, in the past 12 months</strong></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 (n=418)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 (n=267)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 (n=199)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base: All Respondents**

**Note:** There was a question change from 2019 to 2021 allowing respondents to select yes before the past 12 months and yes in the past 12 months, which was not possible in 2019.

MH3. Have you ever received any outpatient treatment or counseling for any problem you were having with your emotions, anxiety, stress, depression, or mental health? Please do not include treatment for alcohol or drug use.

**Base: All Respondents**
Attitudes About Mental Health Improving

MH4. Have you ever received treatment or counseling for emotional or mental health problems using a service available electronically such as telephone or Internet, sometimes called tele-behavioral health services?

**Base:** All Respondents

- **Mental health treatment helps veterinarians lead normal lives**
  - [A] 2023: 73% Agree/Strongly Agree, 24% Neutral, 4% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - [B] 2021: 71% Agree/Strongly Agree, 25% Neutral, 4% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - [C] 2019: 68% Agree/Strongly Agree, 28% Neutral, 3% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

- **Veterinarians are caring toward those with mental illness**
  - [A] 2023: 61% Agree/Strongly Agree, 30% Neutral, 9% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - [B] 2021: 57% Agree/Strongly Agree, 33% Neutral, 11% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - [C] 2019: 57% Agree/Strongly Agree, 34% Neutral, 9% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

- **I feel comfortable discussing mental health topics with other veterinarians**
  - [A] 2023: 64% Agree/Strongly Agree, 20% Neutral, 16% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - [B] 2021: 58% Agree/Strongly Agree, 21% Neutral, 21% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - [C] 2019: 60% Agree/Strongly Agree, 23% Neutral, 17% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Employers Play Major Role in Mental Health
1. Improve Psychological Safety

1. Healthy, frequent discussion removes feelings of isolation
2. Create opportunities for safely discussing mental health
3. Use team meetings to highlight wellbeing resources offered to your employees
4. Discussing challenges and highlighting positives from the past week can help alleviate stress in your team

Our practice openly discusses wellbeing and mental health in team meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Great Extent</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. Create a Positive and Healthy Culture

92% of veterinarians report a sense of belonging to their teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Great Extent</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong sense of belonging to the team</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient time is allotted for each appointment to provide high-quality patient care</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a high degree of trust in the organization</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is candid and open communication among team members</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLINIC. Please indicate how well each of the following describes your practice.
Base: Practicing Veterinarians
3. Provide Employee Assistance Program and Mental Health Coverage

There has been a significant increase in employers/practices offering plans and health care coverage that helps support employee mental health and emotional wellbeing.

**MH13.** Does your practice or employer offer an Employee Assistance Program (a program that helps assist employees with personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, physical or mental health, or emotional wellbeing)?

**MH14.** Does your health insurance provide coverage for mental health counseling or other treatment?

**Base:** All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>[A] 2023 (n=4631)</th>
<th>[B] 2021 (n=2488)</th>
<th>[C] 2019 (n=2871)</th>
<th>[D] 2017 (n=3540)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Assistance Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>[A] 2023 (n=4625)</th>
<th>[B] 2021 (n=2491)</th>
<th>[C] 2019 (n=2366)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health Coverage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have health insurance</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Brakke Consulting] Veterinary Wellbeing Study
Corporate Practices More Likely to Provide Coverage, EAP

61% of corporate practices offer Employee Assistance Programs

MH13. Does your practice or employer offer an Employee Assistance Program (a program that helps assist employees with personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, physical or mental health, or emotional wellbeing)?

MH14. Does your health insurance provide coverage for mental health counseling or other treatment?

Base: All Respondents
4. Conclusions/Q&A
Conclusions

1. Positive findings indicate many are thriving within the veterinary profession
2. Veterinarians as a community are not atypical of the general population
3. Young veterinarians are the most vulnerable
4. There are specific action steps individuals and employers can take to improve wellbeing, lower burnout, and reduce distress
5. There is little to no risk of a significant exodus from the profession
Merck Animal Health Helping Build a Library of Resources

Over $12 million invested in veterinary programs and scholarships since 2017

• Creating a healthy workplace
  o Workplace Wellbeing 1: Setting the Foundation
  o Workplace Wellbeing 2: Self and Social Awareness
• Healthy Strategies for Veterinary Wellbeing
• AAHA Healthy Workplace Culture Initiative
• VHMA
  o Workforce Crisis Initiative
  o Through our investment the [ODD Toolkit](#) was produced as a free resource to help practices.
• NOMV
  o Founding Sponsor of CLEAR Blueprint
• Founding sponsor of MentorVet
  o MentorVet Leap
  o MentorVet Tech
  o MentorVet Connect

[www.avma.org/resources-tools/wellbeing](http://www.avma.org/resources-tools/wellbeing)
[www.vetwellbeing.com](http://www.vetwellbeing.com)
Industry and Financial Resources

- AVMA  
  www.avma.org/resources-tools/wellbeing
- NOMV  
  www.nomv.org
- MentorVet  
  www.mentorvet.net
- AAHA Veterinary Practice Team Wellbeing  
  www.aaha.org/culture
- PrideVMC  
  pridenvcm.org
- Healthy strategies for veterinary wellbeing at vetwellbeing.com  
  www.merck-animal-health-usa.com/offload-downloads/mah-healthy-strategies-infographic
- Learn more about your personality  
  www.verywellmind.com/the-big-five-personality-dimensions-2795422
- AAVMC  
  www.aavmc.org/programs/wellbeing
- My Veterinary Life Wellbeing self assessment  
  myvetlife.avma.org/rising-professional/your-wellbeing/wellbeing-self-assessment
- Veterinary Mental Health Initiative  
  www.shanti.org/programs-services/veterinary-mental-health-initiative
- UT Veterinary Social Work  
  vetsocialwork.utk.edu
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction  
  www.ummhealth.org/umass-memorial-medical-center/services-treatments/center-for-mindfulness/mindfulness-programs/mbsr-8-week-online-live
- AVMA Managing Personal Finances Resources  
  www.avma.org/resources-tools/personal-finance
- Student debt help  
  VIN Foundation Student Debt Center  
  vinfoundation.org/resources/student-debt-center
- Fee-based financial planners  
  Financial Planning: National Association of Personal Financial Advisors  
  napfa.org
- Pro bono financial counseling  
  NAPFA Foundation  
  napfa.org/napfa-foundation
  Financial Planning Association  
  onefpa.org/advocacy/Pages/Pro_Bono_Financial_Planning.aspx
  National Foundation for Credit Counseling  
  nfcc.org