



## Beamtree and Health Roundtable: Organisational Response to Workforce Wellbeing Communique, September 2023

On 11-12 September 2023, approximately 300 healthcare leaders and professionals from Australia, New Zealand and abroad met in Sydney to discuss how to respond to current healthcare workforce wellbeing challenges. Participants shared current opportunities and identified strategies for the future. They were joined by Dr. Tait Shanafelt, Chief Wellness Officer at Stanford University a leading healthcare wellbeing researcher and creator of the Mayo Clinic's Wellbeing Index. Dr Shanafelt shared learnings from the United States and participated in panel discussions with senior delegates. The two-day event expanded on work undertaken by Beamtree and the Health Roundtable Workforce Wellbeing Collaborative Expert Advisory Group's previously identified themes for sustaining the wellbeing of the healthcare workforce:

1. The need for a national workforce wellbeing strategy
2. Enabling true buy-in from health leaders at all levels
3. The importance of an evidence-based approach
4. Wellbeing education to effect change
5. Where to start? – Resources and personnel.

The aims of the event were to

- shift the wellbeing conversation from *words to action* and the healthcare workforce from *surviving to thriving*
- to collaborate, be inspired and learn from global and local experts.

Topics covered included burnout, leadership, culture, technology, education and the operationalisation of wellbeing strategies. Delegates identified suggestions for moving forward independently and together, based on the five themes and learnings from the event.





## Key insights

- Workforce wellbeing is a **critical occupational health and safety issue and affects the quality of patient care**. An organisational culture of personal resilience is not enough. The healthcare system needs to focus on providing safe workplaces as well as balancing financial requirements.
- Think nationally but **act locally**. We cannot solve workforce wellbeing issues with one-size-fits-all solutions. We need to **include everyone** in the healthcare workforce hierarchy and ensure First Nations peoples and other diverse groups are represented.
- **Dedicated leadership** is key, and **structures** determine success. We need strong buy-in from leaders and good governance. Having a Chief Wellness Officer (disciplines represented) in the room ensures leaders include workforce wellbeing in their decision-making and know it is not an 'add on' but core to organisational **sustainability and excellence**.
- **Embed wellbeing at all levels**. Establish clear reporting structures and designate a wellbeing leader for each unit. Provide dedicated time for wellbeing leaders to effectively manage their responsibilities. Strategically align wellbeing initiatives with clinical outcomes and remain well-informed about the latest evidence-based practices.
- Ensure a comprehensive understanding of government operations and processes to be effective in lobbying for policy and funding. To influence a decision, **articulate the impact and return on investment**. Position healthcare workforce wellbeing as an **organisational and community issue**.
- **Manage what you measure**. At a unit level, start with understanding the problem. Use data to identify issues and prioritise interventions. Organisations can create consistent measures and use evidence-based interventions and toolkits to effect change. At the national level, aim for broad agreement on a strategy to have consensus on tools and surveys with a national footprint.
- Shift to a **culture of wellness**. Bring senior leaders with us and take them on a wellbeing learning journey. Recognise that change is slow. Find the right language for your organisation. Is it wellbeing, professional fulfilment or something else? Create a culture that ensures people bring their problems and solutions to you.
- Establish a national wellbeing curriculum and work with the relevant bodies (TAFEs, Universities, Colleges) to create buy-in to **wellbeing education and training**. Redesign health training education to equip the current and future healthcare workforce with essential knowledge and skills. Change workplace culture ensuring wellbeing is built-in at the individual and system levels.



## Key suggestions for moving forward

- **Lead** by example and start today – look after yourself and set boundaries. Check in with the wellbeing of the people you interact with. Model good behaviour and be a voice for wellbeing. Understand you are an integral part of the culture.
- **Collaborate** to build a national wellbeing taskforce and devise a suite of professional standards for good practice in healthcare workforce wellbeing. This would include input from all areas and disciplines within the system.
- **Develop** a toolkit that includes resources to measure and support workforce wellbeing. In addition, establish an AU/NZ Chief Wellness Officer training course to support the development of wellbeing leaders locally.
- **Advocate** collectively for wellbeing research to be a funding priority, for embedding workforce wellbeing programs in state healthcare worker legislation, and for including psychosocial safety in the NSQHS standards.
- **Present** wellbeing evidence and learnings from the event to hospital executives. Pitch big ideas, and strategies that can be implemented. Use language that resonates and normalises workforce wellbeing. Make the business case for wellbeing that demonstrates the return on investment including retention of staff, job satisfaction and patient safety.
- **Commit** to returning to our organisations with one concrete action to take or strategy to implement. Begin with one wellbeing project or revise an existing wellbeing plan.
- Build a **coaching culture** to support wellbeing leaders, new leaders and junior staff.

The Beamtree Workforce Wellbeing Knowledge Network supports the healthcare leader community to connect regularly, share innovation and research, building the ANZ Well-being Index database and work together to identify successful interventions, outcomes and next steps.

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