



## **GME Wellness Sub-Committee Newsbyte**

### **Behavior Change Begins with Us**

On January 4 the FSU Family Medicine Residency Program in Fort Myers had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Wayne Sotile, a psychologist specializing in the wellness of physicians and their families. In his presentations to our faculty and other Lee Health medical staff, Dr. Sotile pointed out the paradox of self-denial, neglect, and even abuse inherent in the culture of medical training, and how this conflicts with the recommendations and advice we give to our patients as means of encouraging healthier lifestyles. These patterns of behavior often continue beyond our years of training through the learned shortcuts of poor sleep habits, pre-prepared meals and the use of stimulants and sedatives (think caffeine and alcohol) to speed us up or slow us down.

Listening to Dr. Sotile got me to thinking about the frequent disconnect between the advice I give to my patients and my own behavior patterns. It led me to consider how physicians' lifestyles in training and in practice differ from the advice we give to our patients. What might we do to make small changes in our own self-care that will enhance our own well-being? Just as importantly, as faculty, how might our incremental changes serve as models for our trainees and foster a culture of wellness in our institutions?

My reflections led me to conclude that the first step toward engendering a culture of well-being, both as individuals and within our programs, is to recognize that our own professional formation influences our understanding of the current culture of medical education. Once we recognize the impact of our own experience, we become free to think critically about the precedents we had previously accepted as part-and-parcel of medical training. While many of the rigors of caring for sick people are inherent to the profession of medicine, the load of these hardships can be lightened by the way we show care for our staff members, our trainees, and ourselves.

We have to learn to resist the cultural idea that being "self-less" necessarily leads to burnout. Developing caring, compassion, and connection in our personal and professional lives are the building blocks of resiliency.

--Drs. Rose Anne Illes and James Breen