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Confluence Health Honored with Gold Recognition by AMA for Commitment to Physician Well-Being

Wenatchee, WA: Confluence Health/Wenatchee Valley Medical Group today announced that it has earned gold recognition in 2025 from the American Medical Association (AMA) as a Joy in Medicine® organization.

The prestigious recognition from the country's leading physician's association honors health systems, hospitals, and medical groups that prioritize proven methods to reduce burnout and enhance the professional fulfillment of doctors that comes from patient care. Organizations that meet the rigorous criteria of the [Joy in Medicine Health System Recognition Program](#) are leaders in the national effort to transform healthcare work systems and address the root causes of burnout among care teams. For the 2025-2026 cohort, Confluence Health is one of only 20 organizations in the country to have received gold recognition, the highest level the AMA awards for this program.

"At Confluence Health, a major component of our vision is to enable joy and pride in our work while we serve our community with compassion and dedication," remarked Katina Maier, chief people and strategy officer for Confluence Health. "We are honored to receive this recognition that acknowledges how important it is that we work to support our staff and providers who, in turn, do so much to support, uplift, and care for the residents of North Central Washington."

This recognition by the AMA comes soon after [Confluence Health was also named one of America's Best Employers by State](#) in the seventh annual list released by Forbes in partnership with market research firm Statista this year at the end of August.

"We want to be known as not only a place to receive excellent care, but as the employer of choice for our region's healthcare professionals," continued Dr. Andrew Jones, CEO for Confluence Health. "We know that we can serve our patients better when we as an organization work to serve those that make that care possible. This recognition is a wonderful acknowledgement of this ongoing work by so many excellent teams working hard each day to support those that care for us all."

Burnout among U.S. physicians peaked at 62.8% in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to [research](#). But thanks to strides made to address burnout at the system level, the national physician burnout rate ebbed to 45.2% in 2023. Despite improvements, physician burnout levels remain much higher than other U.S. workers. Continued efforts are essential to ensure doctors receive the support they need to thrive and achieve national health goals.

"Joy in Medicine recognized organizations are leading the gains made against the physician burnout crisis and help clinicians rediscover the deep rewards and joy that comes from helping patients," said AMA President Bobby Mukkamala, M.D. "The AMA distinction honors each organization's commitment to not only the health and well-being of the care team, but also to patients. Quality care ultimately originates from a positive and purposeful work culture where health care professionals can flourish both mentally and physically."

"Our efforts to support well-being take a wide variety of forms across the organization," explained Dr. Makrina Shanbour, director of provider experience at Confluence Health. "Our Provider Experience Committee supports physicians and advanced-practice providers (APPs) by advocating for wellness, supporting them and their families with opportunities to connect, providing ready access to coaching and counseling, mentoring new hires, supporting a robust onboarding experience, working with teams to improve workflow and technology utilization, holding listening sessions,

and advocating for policy change to decrease the stigma around getting help. Monthly educational lunches and social opportunities allow people to meet and share time together outside of work for social and collegial support.

“We are grateful for Dr. Becket Mahnke, our chief medical information officer, who has been instrumental in decreasing stress related to the electronic medical record and for Dr. Galen Sorom, medical director of provider leadership development, who has led robust physician leadership training and support, especially since burnout has been directly linked to the effectiveness of one’s immediate leader,” continued Dr. Shanbour. “For all staff, the Bringing Encouragement and Support In Difficult Events (BESIDE) program trains and deploys peer supporters throughout the organization to care for our caregivers. Many other programs also bring attention to the good going on across the organization, including the Recognized Excellence Award Confluence Health (REACH) program which celebrates staff and providers each month who go above and beyond in providing excellent care and service. We are honored to receive AMA recognition for this important and needed work.”

Since its inception in 2019, the AMA Joy in Medicine Health System Recognition Program has recognized more than 200 organizations across the country. Recognition levels – gold, silver, bronze – are valid for two years. This year, a total of 109 health organizations nationwide earned recognition with documented efforts to reduce system-level drivers of work-related burnout and demonstrated competencies in commitment, assessment, leadership, efficiency of practice environment, teamwork, and support. Organizations that earned 2025-2026 recognition join a strong group of currently recognized organizations from the 2024-2025 program, bringing the currently recognized cohort to 164 recognized organizations. More about the AMA Joy in Medicine Health System Recognition Program can be found on their website at ama-assn.org/joyinmedicine.

About Confluence Health

Confluence Health serves the largest geographic region of any healthcare system in Washington State, covering over 12,000 square miles of Okanogan, Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Confluence Health is one of only two locally-lead healthcare systems in the state with the purpose of maintaining availability and access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare services for North Central Washington. The Confluence Health Board of Directors provides governance for Confluence Health and includes nine community board members and six physician board members.

About the Wenatchee Valley Medical Group

Wenatchee Valley Medical Group serves North Central Washington as the largest physician group affiliated with Confluence Health. Its history began with the founding of the Wenatchee Valley Clinic (WVC) by three physicians in the 1940s, born from a vision of bringing high-quality, multispecialty, integrated healthcare to the Wenatchee Valley. Over the next 70 years, WVC grew to become Wenatchee Valley Medical Center (WVMC), a large healthcare system that provided care across its four-county region and included 300 physicians in roughly 50 primary care and specialty disciplines. In 2013, WVMC and Central Washington Hospital affiliated to form Confluence Health with the vision to continue to provide high level, comprehensive care locally.

For More Information

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