



LEGISLATIVE DINNERS

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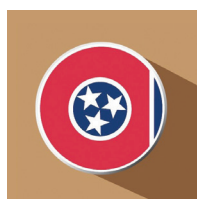
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The “Eat Your Young” Mentality is Alive and Well in Medicine: Part 1



Michael J. Baron, MD
TMF Medical Director

This article was submitted by TMA member Michael J. Baron, MD, MPH, DFASAM

When you Google the term “eat your young mentality,” the first five results refer to how nurses belittle and treat each other with contempt, especially recent graduates. Eating your young is defined by one source as

“neglect, betrayal, or harsh criticism of a group that is of a lower status or position.” In this case, it refers to how the more experienced staff will sometimes intimidate and even sabotage the new nurses—who, of course, will inevitably make a mistake.

Unfortunately, this is not limited to the nursing profession; in my experience, physicians are just as guilty. The medical profession does a poor job of supporting physicians who are sick and in need of help. This is not a recent phenomenon; the “pull yourself up” mentality is time-honored and lethal. It is ironic that we treat our patients much better than we treat our peers with the same illnesses.

Time and again I have seen this harsh punitive treatment of my peers, especially during my time as TMF medical director.

I can give two recent examples.

In one case, a PGY5 surgical specialist resident addiction-related antisocial behavior was terminated with four months left in his training. He was arrested for prescription fraud but was never convicted; instead, he reached a pre-trial diversion plea deal with the district attorney’s office. Even though he completed treatment and was compliant with monitoring while in recovery, he was still fired and had to find another place to complete his training. He eventually found another PGY5 position and received a waiver from his specialty board for the requirement of having to complete the last two years of training in the same institution. Although he is now doing very well, his termination had a significant impact on him. It also sent a message that I believe severely impacted the next surgical resident with a substance use disorder in the institution. This resident ended his own life rather than face the consequences of his Alcohol Use Disorder which, based on precedent, may have included termination from residency.

The second case is an early career physician. In his first year of practice as a surgical specialist, he developed a short-lived Opioid Use Disorder ignited by a legitimate opioid prescription for a sports-related injury. While he was in treatment getting help for his disease, he was fired from his job; the group said it was because of his dishonesty.

Even though making a complaint to the licensing boards by statute can be discretionary, in both cases, like the proverbial salt in the wound, formal complaints were made.

In the next article, we will make the case for supporting, rather than punishing or terminating, our peers who have behavioral health disorders. As always, if you or a colleague needs help with an addiction, mental or behavioral health problem, contact the TMF at e-tmf.org or 615-467-6411. We are here to help.

Clarus Care: A Better Way to Manage After-Hours Calls

Clarus is a technology-based solution to after-hours call management. With Clarus, your medical practice can improve efficiency and lessen time to patient care.

Jordan-Young Institute used a live operator service for after-hours that caused delayed patient care due to long hold times and inaccurate call routing. Their process had no flexibility and was riddled with human errors, causing doctors to consistently receive the wrong calls.

After reflecting on how the process might be improved for patients and physicians, they chose to implement Clarus to provide better care for their community..

“Clarus After-hours has made taking calls much easier and more efficient. Physicians are happier, office staff have more

insight and control, and patients are receiving care more quickly. After-hours has worked so well for us, we switched to Clarus for daytime calls as well,” said James McNamara, Chief Executive Officer of the Jordan-Young Institute.

Learn more about the institute’s experience by reading the full case study at claruscare.com/resources.

Clarus’ After-hours Call Management product eliminates miscommunications and provides your team with an on-call inbox, flexible scheduling calendar and custom notifications. Visit claruscare.com/after-hours for more details.

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