



The Orthopaedic Trauma Association (OTA) recognizes that trauma system functionality is inextricably linked to the well-being of its clinicians. A functional trauma system must support not only rapid and effective patient care, but also the emotional, ethical, and physical sustainability of the physicians and teams who deliver it. Orthopaedic trauma surgeons—often operating under conditions of unpredictability, resource scarcity, and ethical conflict—require systemic, institutional, and cultural support to thrive and deliver optimal care.

We assert that trauma systems must be designed to minimize moral injury and burnout by providing:

- **Structural safeguards**, including equitable scheduling, call burden mitigation, and access to backup coverage.
- **Validated well-being tools** (e.g., the Physician Well-Being Index, WHOOP metrics), integrated into routine practice to monitor provider distress and guide institutional responses.
- **Accessible peer and professional support resources**, including emotional wellness programs, confidential counseling, and high-performance training (such as through partnerships with organizations like the Mission Critical Team Institute).
- **Multidisciplinary wellness strategies** that extend to all trauma team members, including residents, nurses, and advanced practice providers.
- **Patient-centered systemic enhancements**, such as embedded case managers and clear institutional pathways to reduce ethical conflicts caused by bed shortages, insurance limitations, or productivity mandates.

Furthermore, trauma system leaders must shift from individual resilience models toward institutional accountability. Metrics of clinician well-being should be transparently tracked and publicly reported as quality indicators, and leadership should be responsible for mitigating systemic drivers of distress.

By advancing this integrated vision, the OTA affirms its commitment to protecting both the patients we serve and the people who serve them—ensuring a trauma care environment that is not only operationally efficient, but also ethically and emotionally sustainable.