

Study by TSSW faculty published in American Journal of Public Health

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Recently, three TSSW faculty members, [Tonya Cross Hansel PhD, LMSW](#), [Leia Y. Saltzman PhD, LMSW](#), and [Pamela A. Melton DSW, LICSW](#) published [a study in the American Journal of Public Health \(AJPH\)](#). The AJPH is the premier journal in the field of Public Health. Their study, “Work Environment and Health Care Workforce Well-Being: Mental Health and Burnout in Medically Underserved Communities Prone to Disaster,” examines how many health care workers leave the field prior to retirement due to the excessive exhaustion caused by prolonged work-related stress.

The study finds that addressing health care worker burnout requires an ecological systems mindset. This type of mindset considers complex stressors in workers' lives (large-scale disasters and personal stressors), agency-level factors (scheduling and workload), and larger social and contextual administrative factors (allocating time for self-care through scheduling and billing codes). Rarely is it one stressor that affects mental health and burnout. Instead, disasters, community crises, things like COVID-19, or life events lead to stressors that can exacerbate preexisting mental health concerns or deplete coping mechanisms.

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