



2021 Annual Report of the Physician Health Program

Our Mission:

To promote and support the physical and mental well-being of healthcare professionals thereby contributing to overall safe and competent patient care in Rhode Island

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RI Medical Society Foundation

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Peter Hollmann, MD
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John Murphy, MD*
Herbert Rakatansky, MD
Kenneth Wood, DO

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*Resigned from committee during 2021 due to retirement

ABOUT THE PHYSICIAN HEALTH PROGRAM

The Rhode Island Medical Society's Physician Health Program is a confidential resource for physicians, PAs, dentists, and podiatrists in Rhode Island who may benefit from help with addressing physical and/or behavioral health concerns that may be affecting their personal and professional quality of life. We offer the following services:

Clinical Services

- *Intake Assessment
- *Case Management

Ongoing monitoring when indicated for substance use and psychiatric disorders, dual diagnosis, and other behavioral health concerns; advocacy on behalf of healthcare practitioners if warranted

- *Recovery Support Groups for healthcare practitioners

Community Resource & Referrals

Collaboration with the following entities:

- *Board of Medical Licensure & Discipline (BMLD)
- *Board of Examiners in Dentistry
- *Hospitals
- *Medical practices/colleagues
- *Residency and other training programs
- *Community at large (patients, family members, etc.)

Educational

- *Advisors to Brown University's Alpert Medical School Student Health Council
- *Speaker's Program (presentations to medical and physician assistant students, residents, fellows, hospitals and hospital medical staffs)
- *Regional and national organization involvement (Federation of State Physician Health Programs)

~Carrying On During Challenging Times~

Dear Colleagues,

I am reminded of a song from long ago that begins with, "How do you keep the music playing? How do you make it last?" Of course, those lyrics are speaking about love but it makes me think of compassion in much the same way. For those of us in the business of caring for others, we have been facing a major challenge – a crisis of compassion, if you will – by these extraordinary circumstances that are taxing us individually, professionally, and as a society. Despite the obstacles to sustaining compassion and connection to our patients and others, I have found great inspiration in the stories of perseverance and courage I hear through my work with the Rhode Island Medical Society's Physician Health Program (RIPHP). I truly never thought we would still be seeking the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel by the end of 2021. All those "temporary measures" put in place in 2020 to protect staff and participants, are still part of our operations. We continue to follow recommended measures based on the latest public health information.

The Physician Health Program has forged ahead seeing the highest number of referrals in the program's forty-three-year history. We have faced several changes in 2021, too. I am thankful for the twelve years of service by our program administrator, Susan Silvia, who retired in May, and we also said goodbye to our part-time clinical associate, Donna Stetson, LMHC. Newell Warde, PhD, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Medical Society (RIMS), who has been a tremendous support to our program, retired after nearly four decades of service to the organization.

I am sure I do not need to tell you that healthcare practitioners need our support more than ever. We will continue our efforts on their behalf and in support of the important patient care they provide to the citizens of Rhode Island. As always, my heartfelt thanks goes to Herbert Rakatansky, MD, Chairperson of the Physician Health Committee (PHC), and Jerry Fingerut, MD, Chairperson of the RIPHP Governance Committee and the many dedicated members of these two important committees.

The following report summarizes the activities and efforts of the Physician Health Program in 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Boyd, MSW, LICSW

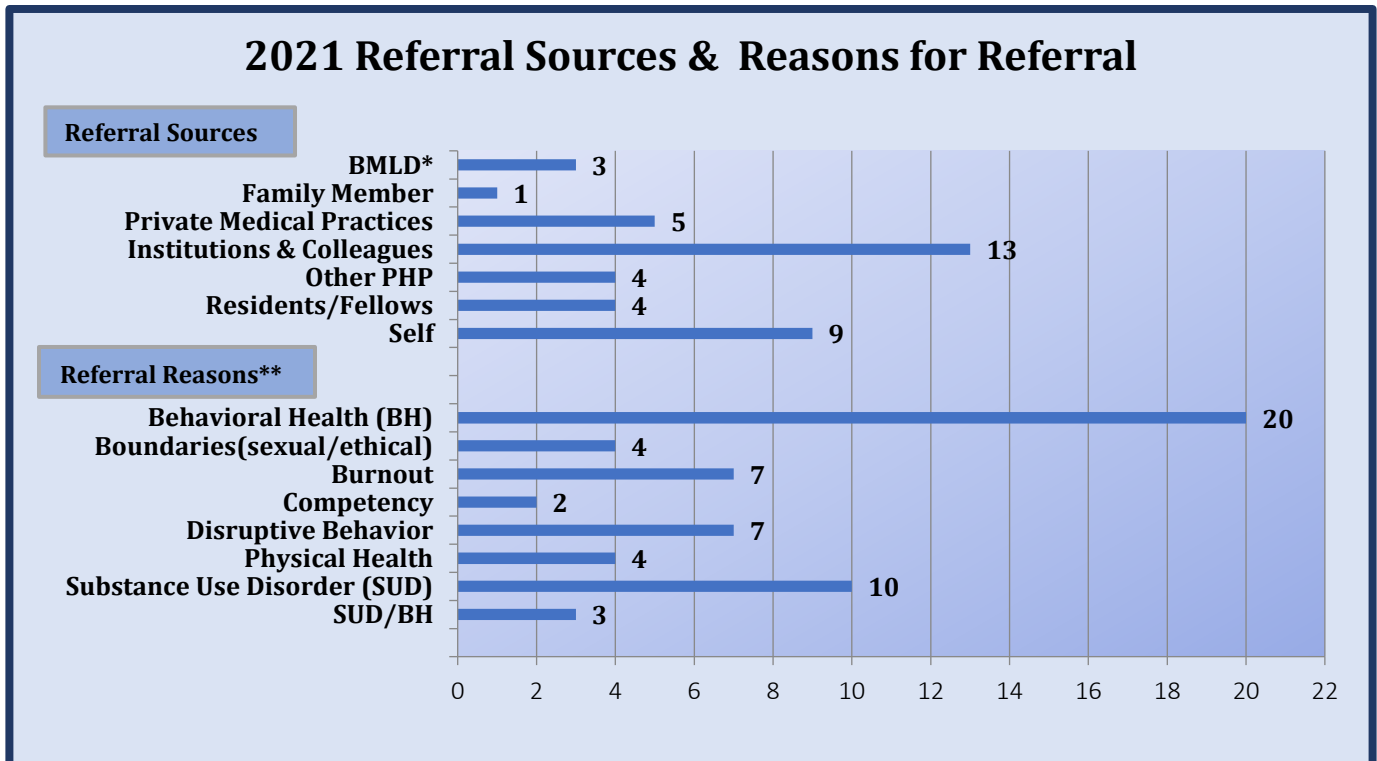
Kathleen Boyd, MSW, LICSW
Director, Physician Health Program
January 31, 2021

~ Year in Review ~

January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

CLINICAL ACTIVITIES

During the past year, the Rhode Island Medical Society’s Physician Health Program (RIPHP) received **39** referrals to the program. This marks a substantial uptick from 2020 (24) and the highest number of referrals since the program began in 1978. During 2021, the program had administrative and/or clinical oversight for a total of **101** cases. The sources of our program referrals in 2021 and reasons for the referrals are shown in the chart below:



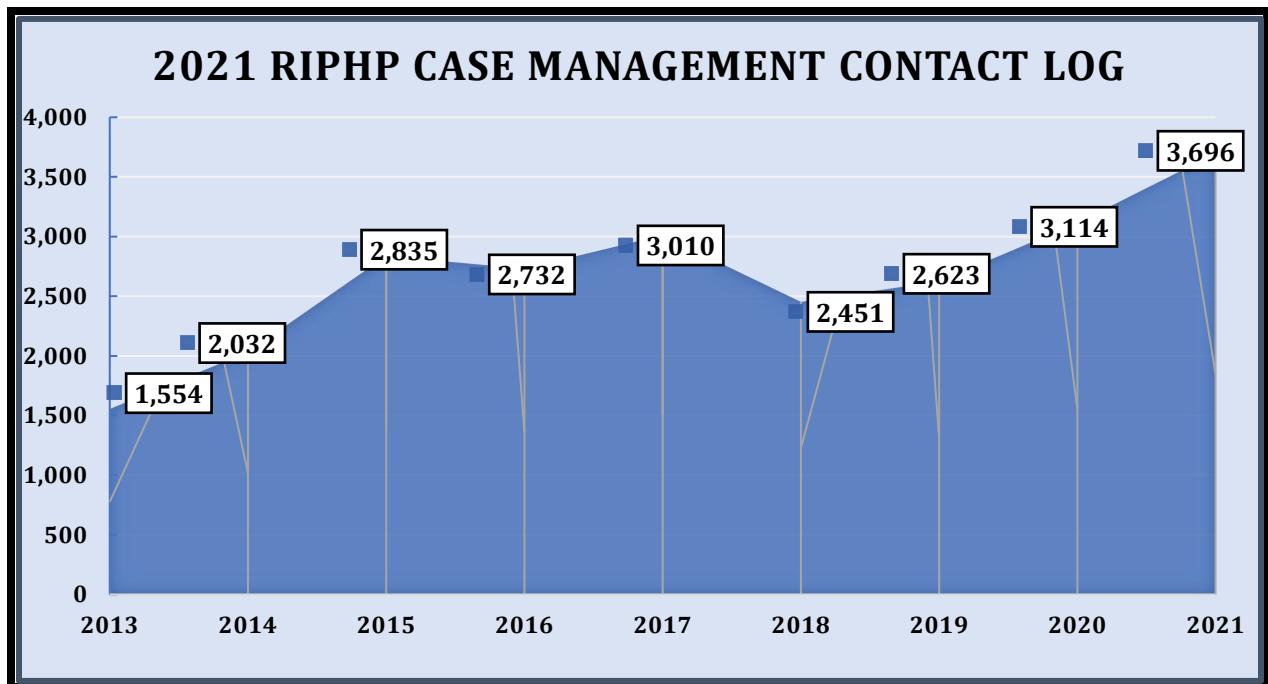
**Board of Medical Licensure & Discipline; **Please note some cases were referred for more than one reason.*

The stress of the ongoing pandemic may be seen in the increase in referrals from institutional and private medical practices which went from 10 referrals in 2020 (9 institutional/colleague referrals and 1 from private medical practice) to a total of 18 referrals in 2021 (13 and 5, respectively). In addition, there was an increase in self referrals. In 2020, we had 3 self-referrals vs. 9 in 2021. We continue to see the largest number of referrals having to do with behavioral health issues. Referrals related to professionalism can overlap with psychiatric and substance use disorders which may be discovered during the assessment process.

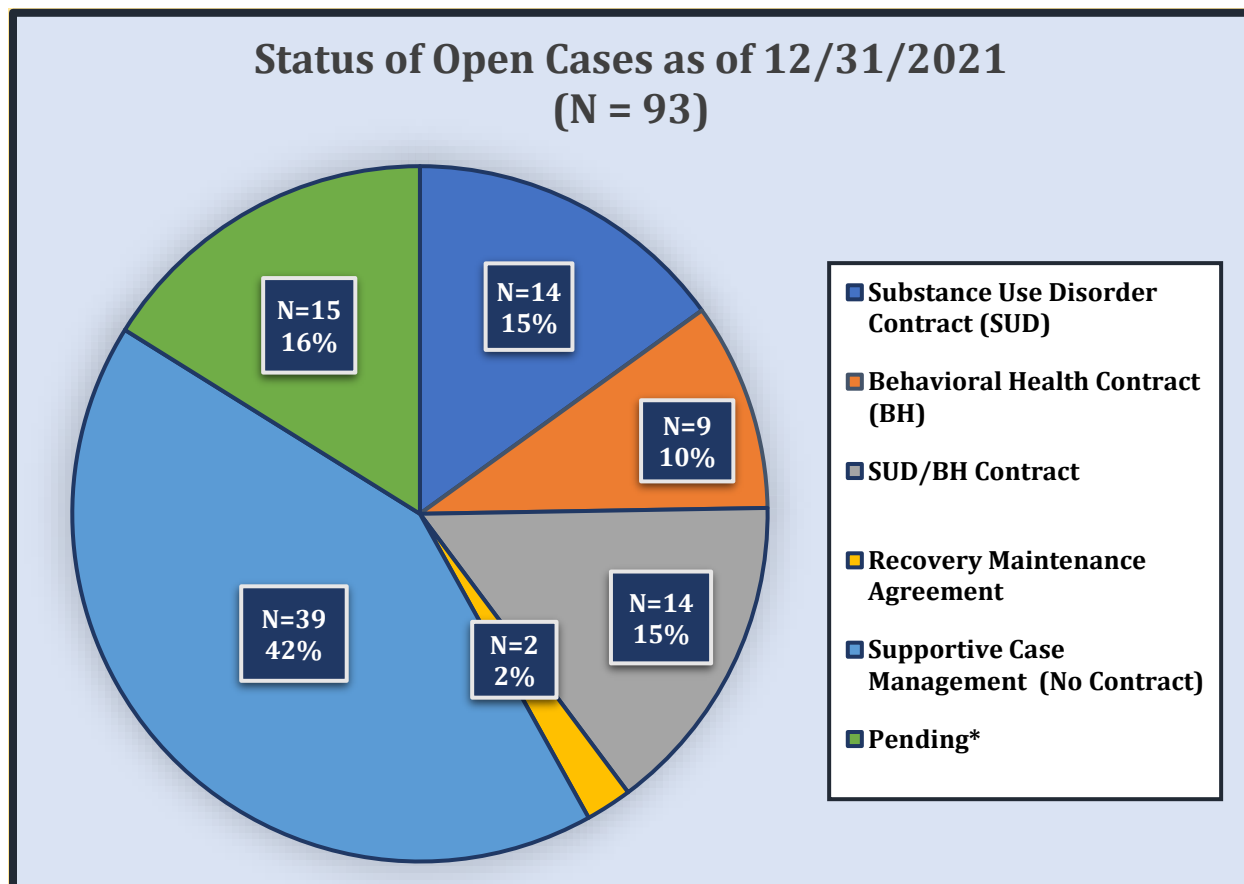
Of the **39** referrals to RIPHP in 2021, **4** represent referrals of cases that were re-opened, meaning the individuals had previous contact with our program. The breakdown of the status of these cases is shown below:

Disposition of 2021 Referrals	N = 39	%
Monitoring Contracts: SUD	4	10.3
Monitoring Contracts: BH	1	2.5
Monitoring Contracts: SUD/BH	1	2.5
Supportive Case Management: Periodic Review for support with no formal monitoring agreement	22	56.4
Assessment still in progress/pending	7	18.0
Did not follow up with referral to program and/or refused recommendations	4	10.3

The following chart shows case management activities since 2013 when we began keeping track of this data. Case management for a single case can involve multiple collateral contacts, administrative tasks, such as advocacy and compliance letters, and daily monitoring of any toxicology results for each participant who is under a substance use disorder monitoring contract. Examples of case management activities include participant phone calls, texts/emails, and in-person meetings as well as collateral phone calls, emails, and correspondence on behalf of a participant.



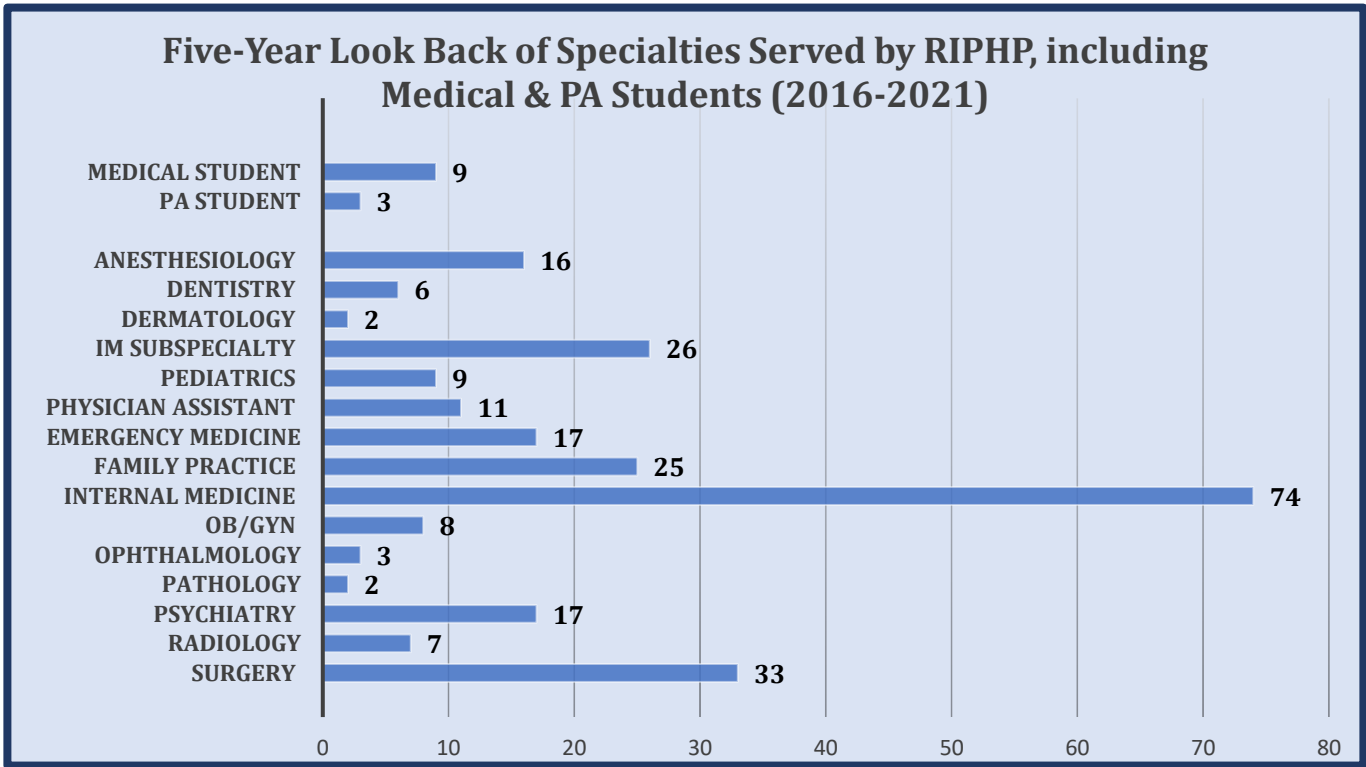
Eight cases were closed by the end of the year. The chart below reflects the number of open cases as we begin 2022.



**Pending cases may be awaiting further evaluation, follow-up and/or outreach, or awaiting closure.*

The active cases at the end of the year represent **67** physicians, **15** residents/fellows, **6** medical students, **2** physician assistants (PA), and **3** PA students. Currently, we do not have any dentists or podiatrists in the program. As you can see, students and physicians-in-training now make up almost one-third of our cases.

The following chart gives a breakdown of the various specialties that have accessed our services over the past five years.



COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Every year at the Physician Health Program, we receive calls and emails inquiring about various concerns ranging from requests for information on treatment resources to finding guest speakers on health topics which affect health care practitioners. In 2021, the program received 38 requests for advice, consultations, and resource information. The types of requests received are indicated in the chart below:

2021 Requests for Consultation and/or Resource Information	N= 38
Concerns about colleagues and/or patients with substance use and/or behavioral health issues	11
Organizations/other healthcare professionals seeking treatment and/or other resource information	22
General Information about the RIPHP	3
Information on physician wellness and burnout	2

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Physician Health Program educates physicians, physician assistants, residents, fellows, medical and PA students, health care administrators, hospitals and the general public regarding addiction and other illnesses which can affect healthcare practitioners. In 2021, we provided presentations to the intern, resident/fellows orientations for Lifespan, Kent Hospital, and Roger Williams Medical Center. In addition, we serve as guest lecturers for physician assistant classes at Bryant University and Johnson and Wales University.

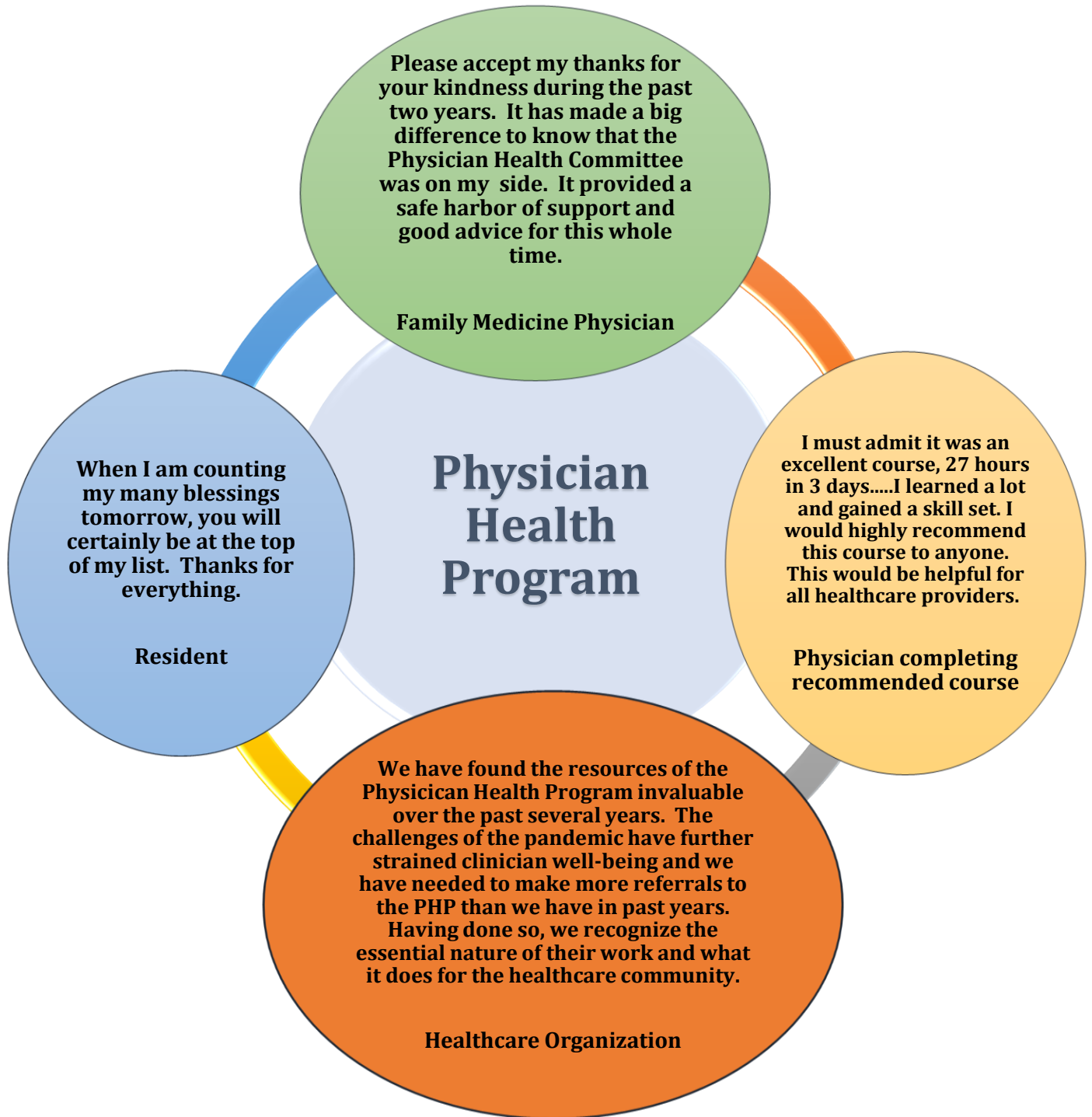
We continue to serve as advisors to the Brown's Alpert Medical School's Student Health Council (SHC) which is modeled after the RIPHP. This group of medical students meets once per month to discuss referrals to its peer counseling program and to plan and implement supportive wellness opportunities for medical students.

In 2021, RIPHP utilized the expertise of Sharon Danosky of Danosky & Associates who is the consultant we hired through the generosity of a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, to develop presentation materials to expand our educational outreach efforts. Ms. Danosky works specifically with non-profit health and human service organizations to target sustainable models of funding. See the results of our efforts in the program highlights that follow.

2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- The RIPHP director participated in a two-part wellness series for health care professionals sponsored by Providence Business News and Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island: ***Addressing Physician Wellness During the COVID Pandemic*** and ***Self-Care Strategies for Enduring the Pandemic***. The second part featured Ms. Boyd along with panelists Shideh Shafie, MD, Emergency Medicine physician, and Diane Mahoney, RN, an Integrative Therapy Nurse at Miriam Hospital. **To watch the 90-minute summit**, click [HERE](#) for the recording.
- RIPHP increased its outreach efforts in 2021 with presentations to: CharterCare Health Partners, Lifespan's CMO Council Meeting, and Kent Hospital's Chiefs' Council Meeting.
- RIPHP Director and Newell Warde, RIMS Executive Director, presented, ***The Rhode Island Medical Society: Aspects of Advocacy for Professional Satisfaction and Personal Wellness***, for Brown Medicine Grand Rounds.
- The RIPHP director continues on the Board of Directors of the Federation of Physician Health Programs (FSPHP) and cohosted the FSPHP Virtual Northeast Regional Conference in September with nine programs attending.
- RIPHP director was asked to participate on the **Resident Well-being Curriculum Team** being facilitated by Lifespan Human Resources Department.
- We like to highlight the successful completion of RIPHP monitoring contracts. In 2021, five participants completed five-year substance use disorder monitoring contracts and two participants completed behavioral health monitoring contracts.

~Thank you for your words that keep us carrying on our mission~



~Thanks & Gratitude to our 2021 Contributors~
Supported 100% by donations contributed to the RIMS Foundation (501c3)

Professional Associations

RI Academy of Family Physicians
RI Academy of Physician Assistants
RI Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians
RI Chapter, American College of Surgeons
RI Dental Association
RI Dermatology Society
RI Medical Women's Association
RI Orthopaedic Society
RI Podiatric Medical Association
RI Psychiatric Society
RI Society of Addiction Medicine
RI Society of Anesthesiologists
RI Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons

Other Physician Groups

Brown Emergency Medicine
Brown Medicine
Coastal Medical Group
RI Primary Care Physicians Corporation
University Orthopedics

Medical Staff Associations

Bradley Hospital Medical Staff
Butler Hospital Medical Staff
Kent Hospital Medical Staff
Landmark Medical Center Medical Staff
Miriam Hospital Medical Staff
Newport Hospital Medical Staff
Rhode Island Hospital Medical Staff
Roger Williams Medical Center Staff
South County Hospital Medical Staff
St. Joseph Medical Center Staff
Women & Infants Hospital Medical Staff



Hospitals/Health Care Systems

Care New England Health Systems

Butler Hospital
Kent Hospital
Women & Infants Hospital

Charter Care Health Partners

Roger Williams Medical Center
St. Joseph Medical Center

Landmark Medical Center

Lifespan Health Systems

Bradley Hospital
Miriam Hospital
Newport Hospital
Rhode Island Hospital
Hasbro Children's Hospital

South County Hospital

Health Insurers

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island
Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island
United Healthcare of New England

Liability Insurers

The Coverys Companies
Lifespan Risk Services, Inc.
MMJUA of RI

Other

Bryant University
Johnson & Wales University
HUB International

Individual Donors

Anne Cushing-Brescia, MD
Kwame Dapaah-Afryie, MD
Christopher Erstling, MD
Jerald Fingerut, MD
John J. Przygoda, MD
Herbert Rakatansky, MD & Barbara Sokoloff
Patrick Sweeney, MD
Dominick Tammaro, MD & Cay Tammaro, MD

**RIPHP also extends our thanks to the many dedicated treatment professionals
who work with our program participants every year.**