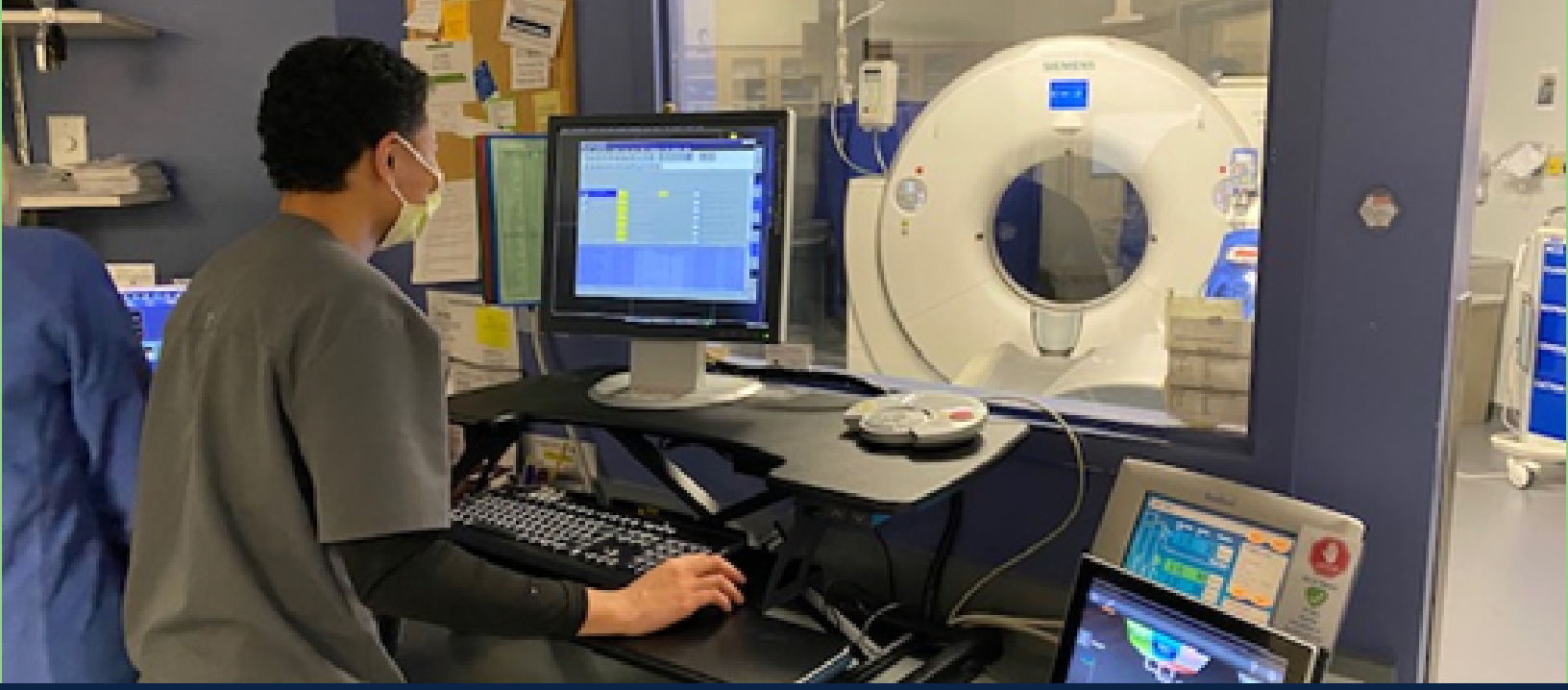

EmWELL Micro Funding Impact Report

2024 Cohort

Executive Overview

The EmWELL Micro Funding Program supports frontline employees in developing and implementing employee-driven solutions to enhance workplace well-being. By offering up to $5,000 in funding per project, the program empowers employees with firsthand insight into operational challenges to create meaningful, sustainable changes within their units and departments. Since the program's establishment in 2023, EmWELL has funded 23 teams and distributed over $65,000 to support well-being initiatives across diverse clinical and academic settings.

During the 2024 application cycle, 58 proposals were received and evaluated by a team of 13 volunteer reviewers. Five projects were selected for funding based on scoring criteria, with a total of $15,000 awarded. Over 400 employees were impacted through these projects, spanning 8 operating units. Funded projects demonstrated measurable impact, contributing to reduced burnout, increased professional fulfillment, and enhanced resilience among participants.

Looking ahead, several projects from this cohort are advancing toward broader dissemination, including additional planned journal and conference submissions. The EmWELL Micro Funding Program continues to serve as a catalyst for innovative employee well-being initiatives, with strong outcomes to date and a growing pipeline of impactful projects.

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Overview

Purpose

At EmWELL, we believe that meaningful and sustainable change begins with empowering our frontline employees—those who experience day-to-day challenges firsthand and have deep insight into what their teams truly need to thrive. To turn ideas into action, EmWELL offers an annual micro funding opportunity of up to $5,000 to support select individual teams in executing employee-driven approaches tailored to their unique environments.

2024 Application Cycle

- Application opened in May 2024
- 58 applications received in total
- Applications randomized to team of 13 volunteer reviewers
- 5 applications selected for funding based on evaluation criteria, with 4 projects completing within the designated timeline

Funding

- $15,000 awarded to teams at beginning of FY25
- All funds required to be used with FY25

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By the Numbers

422 employees impacted by projects

8 operating units/schools impacted

4 conference abstracts submitted

$15,000 in funds distributed across 5 teams

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EmWELL Micro Funding Program: 2024 Cohort Projects

Name of Project Lead(s)	Business Unit of Lead(s)	Project Title	Target Audience
Zach Grunewald, PhD, MS, RDN Reginia Mouton, MBA, RT(R)(ARRT), RVT(ARDMS)	Department of Radiology	Waveforms & Well-Being: Establishing Ergonomic Workstations in Radiology	Radiology Departments at Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital, Emory Johns Creek Hospital, Emory Decatur Hospital, and Emory University Hospital
Pauline Chen, BSN, RN, SCRN	Emory University Hospital, 3G/9E	Code Lavender-Decreasing Burnout for our Caregivers	Brain Health Inpatient Units at Emory University Hospital
Taylor Hayes, MMSc, MPH, PA-C, ATC	Schoole of Medicine, Department of Family and Preventive Medicine	Correlation between lifestyle medicine and professional practice in academia	School of Medicine, School of Nursing, and Rollins School of Public Health
Ashley Gagnon, DMD, PGY-2 Shelly Abramowicz, DMD, MPH, FACS	School of Medicine, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	Incorporating Enhanced Stress Resilience Training (ESRT) into Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	School of Medicine, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Gisel Bello, PGY-3 OB/GYN Jennifer Gustafson, MD, OB/GYN	School of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology	Resilience Through Narrative: A Well-Being Initiative for OB/GYN Residents	School of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Waveforms & Well-Being: Establishing Ergonomic Workstations in Radiology

Zach Grunewald, PhD, MS, RDN
Senior Manager, Radiology Quality and Safety

Project Aim

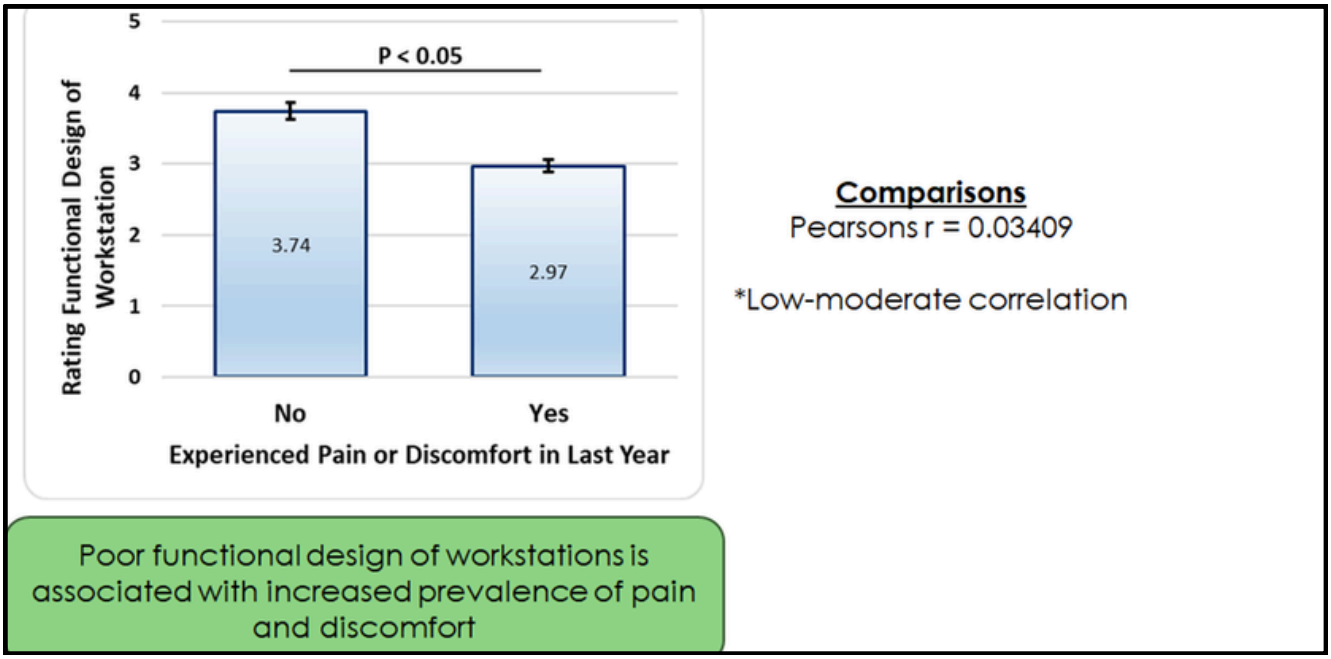
• **Aim 1:** Assess current workstation environments and potential repetitive strain injuries (RSI)/musculoskeletal discomfort in radiology
• **Aim 2:** Pilot enhances ergonomic workstations in select radiology work areas

Design/Data Collection

- Radiology Ergonomics and Strain Assessment Survey (RESAS)
  - Sent to 1,500 employees, 200 responses received
  - Assessed fatigue, environment, strain, prior training, opportunities

Results

- **67% of respondents experienced pain or discomfort** in last year and **31% sought medical advice** for symptoms
- **Chairs most cited (43%)** aspect of workstation that needs improvement



Waveforms & Well-Being: Establishing Ergonomic Workstations in Radiology

Zach Grunewald, PhD, MS, RDN
Senior Manager, Radiology Quality and Safety

Results (cont.)

- **Walking pads, sit-stand desks, ergonomic chairs, and arm sling** installed across 8 work stations at ESJH, EJCH, EDH, and EUH
- Rating of workspace functional design and setup **increased from 3.23 (pre-intervention) to 4.14 (post-intervention)**

Ergonomic Implementation	Response Rate	Satisfaction (1-5)	Function and Design of Space (1-5)	Function and performance at work	Likelihood to recommend
Sit-Stand Desk	7	4.3	3.9	7.4	7.9
Ergo Chair	3	4.7	4.7	**8.7**	**9.0**
Walking Pad	3	4.7	4.7	**8.7**	**10.0**
Arm Sling	1	3.0	3.0	5.0	5.0

Ergonomic Chairs (technologists) and Walking Pads (radiologists) received highest feedback scores for function, efficiency, and likelihood to recommend

"The walking pad(s) are great! Combined with the standing desks it really helps having some movement during the day while also being productive."

"I do enjoy the new chair a lot more than the last one. The lumbar support makes a huge difference."

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Code Lavender- Decreasing Burnout for our Caregivers

Pauline Chen, BSN, RN, SCRN
Patient Education Coordinator

Watch Code Lavender in action here.

Project Aim

The aim is to assess the feasibility and helpfulness of implementing Code Lavender across the Woodruff Health Sciences Center.

Design/Data Collection

- Staff burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel - MBI-HSS (MP)
- Employee Experience from the People Pulse Survey
- Survey regarding contents of box

Results

- Code Lavender called **57 times**
- **132 of 250 boxes distributed** at Emory University Hospital
- Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel - MBI-HSS (MP):
  - **Emotional exhaustion decreased from 27.8 to 23**
  - **Depersonalization decreased from 9.5 to 6.8**
  - **Personal accomplishment increased from 34.5 to 40**

"This box was an uplifting surprise to receive during my shift. I appreciated the thoughtfulness very much!"

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Correlation between lifestyle medicine and professional practice in academia

Taylor Hayes, MMSc, MPH, PA-C, ATC
Assistant Professor of Family and Preventive Medicine

Project Aims

- **Aim #1:** Determine baseline lifestyle behavior engagement relative to professional fulfillment, burnout, and work productivity
- **Aim #2:** Identify barriers and facilitators of lifestyle practice and well-being
- **Aim #3**: Implement lifestyle initiatives to create a supportive environment for improved faculty well-being and longevity in academia

Design/Data Collection

- Pre-intervention online survey (~8 min) + semi-structured in-depth interviews (~30-50 min)
- Inclusion criteria: faculty appointment in the SOM, SON, or RSPH
- Validation questionnaires used: 21-item Lifestyle Medicine Assessment (LMA), 8-item Work Limitations Questionnaire (WLQ), 16-item Professional Fulfillment Index (PFI)

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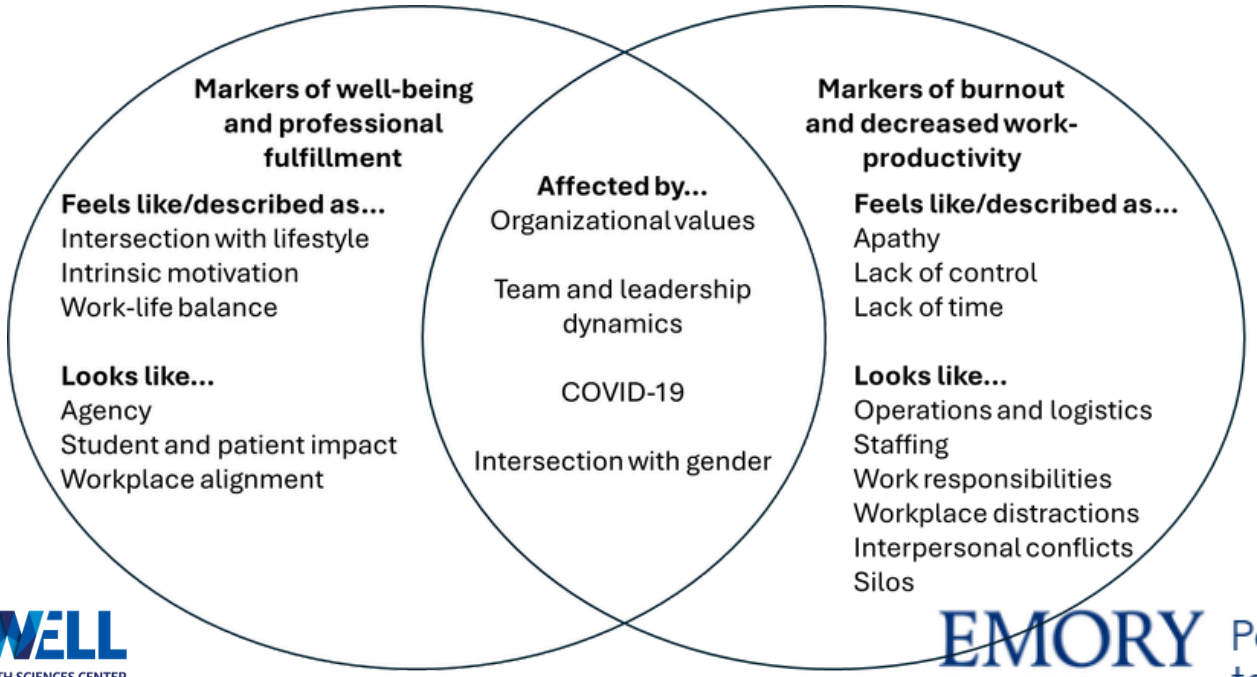
Correlation between lifestyle medicine and professional practice in academia (cont.)

Taylor Hayes, MMSc, MPH, PA-C, ATC
Assistant Professor of Family and Preventive Medicine

Results

- **62 WHSC faculty** were included in the pilot (74.2% MD and/or PhD, remainder allied health and nursing)
- Higher integration of the 6 pillars of lifestyle medicine is correlated with statistically significant changes:
  - **Higher professional fulfillment (r = 0.26, p = 0.044)**
  - **Lower burnout (r= -0.29, p = 0.025)**
  - **Lower work productivity loss (r=0.37, p = 0.007)**
- **Higher professional fulfillment is correlated with less productivity loss (r = -0.51, p = <0.001), while higher burnout is correlated with greater productivity loss (r = 0.65, p = <0.001)**
- Regression analysis demonstrated that **each 1-point increase in lifestyle medicine assessment score** (scale 0-50) is associated with **~0.27% lower WLQ productivity loss** (β = −0.27, p = 0.014) and about **13% higher odds of having high professional fulfillment** (OR 1.13, p = 0.038)



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Incorporating Enhanced Stress Resilience Training (ESRT) into Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Ashley Gagnon, DMD, PGY-2
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Project Aim

The aim of the project is to provide an opportunity for residents, attendings, and staff in the division of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) to complete enhanced stress resilience training (ESRT).

Design/Data Collection

- Pre and post intervention surveys were collected which contained several validated surveys including:
  - Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale
  - Mental Health Continuum Short Form
  - Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

Results

- **20 participants** (17 Residents, 1 Fellow and 2 Attendings in the OMFS)
- Initial data analysis showed:
  - **Reduction in frequency of high-burnout responses**
  - **Shift towards lower frequency responses to perceived frequency of stress**
  - **Improved moment-to-moment awareness and cognitive regulation**
- Data supports **improved stress perception, reduced burnout indicators, and increased mindfulness/resilience behaviors**
- Long-term outcomes are currently in progress, with planned follow-up assessments at 6 months and 1 year post-intervention to evaluate sustained changes in stress resilience and wellness

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Resilience Through Narrative: A Well-Being Initiative for OB/GYN Residents

Gisel Bello, MD, PGY-3
Department of OB/GYN

Project Aim

To integrate narrative medicine workshops into the OBGYN residency program to address burnout and enhance residents' mental well-being and resilience.

Design/Data Collection

- Recruitment:
  - Email sent to 27 eligible residents
  - 8 residents signed up: 3 PGY-1s, 2 PGY-2s, 3 PGY-3s
- 4 structured sessions completed
  - Resident-only space
  - Journaling time at the beginning of each session for self check-ins with guided prompts
  - Learning on specific topic with relevant activity

Results

- Session topics included:
  - Physician mental health & suicidality
  - Grief in medicine
  - Difficult conversations with patients and colleagues
  - Second victim syndrome
  - Community building in medicine
- **Emerging themes** from Resident sessions:
  - Reduced resident isolation
  - Stronger resident relationships
  - Increased vulnerability and openness among residents
  - Reconnection with personal identity outside of medicine
  - Increased emotional processing
  - Sustained psychological safety throughout sessions

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Key Takeaways & What's Next

Key Takeaways

Projects contibuted to **reduced burnout, enhanced professional fulfillment, and increased resiliency** among project participants

Clinicians practicing in **various settings participated in projects**, including those in inpatient, outpatient, research, and teaching settings, and those in training (Residents, Fellows)

Over **400 employees impacted**, spanning **8 operating units**

The EmWELL Micro Funding Program continues to **build growing momentum of interventions** that positively impact employee well-being

What's Next

4 additional journal/conference submissions planned

Expected **longitudinal data** for "Incorporating Enhanced Stress Resilience Training (ESRT) into Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery"

Data from **intervention phase** for "Correlation between lifestyle medicine and professional practice in academia"

Continued **collaboration with Spiritual Health and Radiology** to increase accessibility of stress relief techniques (Code Lavender) and Ergonomic Work stations for employees, respectively

The next micro funding application opens May 2026, check **emwell.emory.edu/our-work/micro-funding** for updates

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