GP wellbeing is more than a tick box exercise

New Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) indicators in England seek to reward GP wellbeing through absence reporting, access to support services, and options for flexible working. Practices must also participate in peer review of a wellbeing quality improvement project. This activity will increase workload for GPs and practices already under enormous strain and its responsibility fall on the shoulders of overstretched GP partners and managers. No increase in overall QOF remuneration is on offer in return, potentially leaving GPs’ duty of probity or leave them fearing professional consequences of ‘not coping’.

More broadly, the new targets risk becoming a stick to beat GPs: by either gifting evidence for government that morale is high or by placing responsibility for low morale squarely upon GP practices. Measures that become targets famously cease to be good measures. GP negotiators must beware subterfuge and seek transparent alternatives that address the specific and systemic challenges facing frontline primary care employees. GP wellbeing is more than a tick box exercise.

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REFERENCES

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