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The High Cost of Bullying

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Bullying in health care professions is epidemic, and is often considered a rite of passage. Bullying has many deleterious effects, including a physical and emotional toll on those who are victimized or observe others being victimized, as well as myriad financial and administrative effects on the organization itself. Bullying has been implicated in increased absenteeism, workplace errors, reduced productivity, attrition, and increased costs in terms of insurance claims and litigation. Both the victim and the organization can anticipate immediate and long-term consequences of bullying. However, the majority of organizations have not created or enforced policies to prohibit and address bullying. A literature review of several professions indicated that bullying has many antecedents, and uncovered best-practice measures for proactively addressing bullying. This information can guide the creation of administrative policies and procedures for addressing bullying in order to mitigate the costs both to the organization and to those who would otherwise be victimized.