WEALTHCARE FINANCIALS

Mid-Career Physicians and Practice Owners: Is Your Income Protection Keeping Pace?

Your Financial Exposure Has Changed Since Residency

Early in a medical or dental career, the income protection conversation is relatively straightforward: you have one income stream, modest overhead, and limited dependents. By mid-career, that picture looks very different. Practice ownership, partnership agreements, staff payroll, facility leases, and business loans mean that a disability no longer threatens just your personal income — it can unwind years of professional and financial infrastructure.

Yet many physicians and dentists who obtained disability coverage during training never revisit it as their circumstances evolve. The policy that made sense at 29 may be structurally mismatched to the practice owner you are at 45.

What Mid-Career Professionals Should Be Evaluating

Benefit Amount vs. Current Income

Disability insurance benefit amounts are typically set at issue and do not automatically adjust as income grows. If your policy was purchased when your income was significantly lower than it is today, there may be a meaningful gap between what you would receive in the event of a claim and what you actually need to sustain your household and practice obligations.

Own-Occupation Definition

How a policy defines disability is arguably its most consequential feature. An own-occupation definition means that if you become unable to perform the material duties of your specific specialty, you may qualify for benefits — even if you can technically work in a different capacity. For a hand surgeon, a cardiologist, or an oral surgeon, this distinction matters enormously. When reviewing any existing policy, confirm exactly how disability is defined and whether that definition is specialty-specific.

Policy Portability and Independence from Your Practice

Individual disability insurance follows you personally, not your employer or your practice entity. If you dissolve a partnership, sell your practice, or change affiliations, a portable individual policy remains in force. Group coverage through a practice or hospital system typically does not travel with you and may have definition and benefit limitations that differ substantially from an individual contract.

Noncancelable and Guaranteed Renewable Provisions

A noncancelable, guaranteed renewable policy means the insurer cannot cancel your coverage, raise your premiums, or alter your policy terms as long as you pay your premiums — typically to age 65 or 67.

The Prevalence Gap Worth Noting

According to the 14th Annual Guardian Workplace Benefits Study, 43% of working Americans owned disability insurance in 2025. For a profession where income is both the primary financial asset and the engine that sustains a practice, that means a substantial portion of the workforce is unprotected — or underprotected. The Social Security Administration estimates that a working person faces roughly a 1-in-4 chance of experiencing a disability before retirement. Those are not remote odds for a 45-year-old physician with 20-plus working years ahead.

Business Overhead: A Separate but Related Consideration

Personal disability insurance replaces a portion of your income. It is generally not designed to cover the fixed costs of running a practice — rent, staff salaries, equipment loans, and malpractice premiums do not pause during a disability leave. Business overhead expense coverage is a separate product category that some practice owners use to address that specific exposure. If you own or co-own a practice and have not evaluated this category, it is worth including in any comprehensive review.

A Practical Starting Point

Mid-career is a logical inflection point for a coverage audit. Pulling together your existing policy documents — including the definitions section, benefit schedule, and any riders — and comparing them against your current income, practice structure, and financial obligations gives you a clearer picture of where gaps may exist.

Wealthcare Financials works with physicians and dentists at this stage of their careers to review existing coverage and, where appropriate, identify individual disability options suited to their specialty and practice situation. If a structured review would be useful, reach out to start the conversation.

The content is developed from sources believed to be providing accurate information. The information in this material is not intended as tax or legal advice. Please consult legal or tax professionals for specific information regarding your individual situation. The opinions expressed and material provided are for general information, and should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security.

This material is intended for general use. By providing this content Park Avenue Securities LLC and your financial representative are not undertaking to provide investment advice or make a recommendation for a specific individual or situation, or to otherwise act in a fiduciary capacity.

Capitol Wealth Strategies and Wealthcare Financials is an Agency of The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America® (Guardian), New York, NY. Securities products and advisory services offered through Park Avenue Securities LLC (PAS), member FINRA , SIPC . OSJ: 901 S. Mopac Expy, Barton Oaks IV, Ste 150, Austin, TX 78746, ph# 512.651.2009 PAS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Guardian. Capitol Wealth Strategies is not an affiliate or subsidiary of PAS or Guardian.

AR Insurance License # 15842501

Important Disclosures · Online Privacy Statement · Form CRS · Online Terms and Conditions of Use

GARI case # 9099692.1 Exp. 09/28 · © Wealthcare Financials · Capitol Wealth Strategies