



Stronger Lawyers, Safer Practices: Reflections from a National Insurance Conference

The dynamic agenda of the 2025 Annual Conference of the National Association of Bar-Related Insurance Companies offered insights, reminders, and discussions on challenges and opportunities facing legal and professional liability insurance industries. Here are key takeaways.

BY MATTHEW M. BEIER

In late September, members of the Wisconsin Lawyers Mutual Insurance Co. (WILMIC) leadership team traveled to Los Angeles to attend the 2025 Annual Conference of the National Association of Bar-Related Insurance Companies (NABRICO) hosted by Lawyers' Mutual Insurance Company [of California].¹ This yearly event brings together bar-related insurers from across the country to exchange ideas and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the legal and professional liability insurance industries.

The conference agenda was as dynamic as ever, with presentations covering a wide range of issues, including the role of ChatGPT and artificial intelligence (AI) in legal practice, effective communication strategies, voir dire and jury selection techniques, and lawyer wellness and resilience. Each session offered valuable insight into how the legal landscape is evolving and what that means for insurers and policyholders alike.

Connecting AI, Communication, and Human Resilience

One of the dominant themes of this year's conference was the interplay between technology and human performance. Presenters discussed how new tools like AI are reshaping how lawyers research, write, and manage their workloads. While the possibilities are exciting, the discussions also emphasized that technology will never replace the uniquely human skills that define effective lawyering – judgment, empathy, communication, and the ability to connect meaningfully with clients, juries, and colleagues.

This human element came through strongly in several sessions. Talks on effective

communication² and voir dire strategies³ reminded us that the ways lawyers present themselves – their clarity, authenticity, and tone – often matter as much as their legal arguments. These sessions tied directly into the broader message of risk management: professionalism, trustworthiness, and emotional intelligence all play critical roles in reducing client dissatisfaction and, ultimately, claims.

A Powerful Reminder on Wellness

Among the many strong presentations, the session that resonated most deeply with me was the program on lawyer wellness, led by Beth Bishop,⁴ a performance and wellness coach known for her work on stress regulation and sustainable health habits.



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Bishop's presentation reframed wellness as a core component of professional risk management rather than an optional self-care activity. She began with a simple observation: the practice of law is inherently stressful, and much of that stress is compounded by the sedentary nature of modern legal work. Long hours sitting at a desk, coupled with constant mental strain and the high stakes of legal outcomes, create a perfect storm for both physical and psychological fatigue.

Drawing on neuroscience and practical experience, Bishop explained how chronic stress affects the body and mind. She explained that stress diminishes focus and increases susceptibility to mistakes. For lawyers, these aren't just health concerns; they're professional vulnerabilities. When fatigue and burnout develop, judgment suffers and communication falters, which can lead to big problems.

Bishop offered several practical approaches lawyers can use to stay sharp and resilient:

- Movement and micro-breaks throughout the day to counteract the effects of sitting and boost energy.
- Intentional breathing techniques to calm the nervous system and regain

focus during high-pressure moments – think breathing for readiness – not to relax, but to stabilize, focus, and prepare to perform at your peak.

- Building small, consistent habits that prevent stress from accumulating in the first place, rather than trying to undo it after the fact. How many of you reach for your phone, check your email, or turn on the news as the first thing you do when you wake up? Go for a walk!
- Developing body awareness – learning to recognize the physical cues of tension or exhaustion early, so intervention happens before burnout sets in.

What stood out most was Bishop's insistence that wellness is not about grand resolutions or occasional exercise binges but is about building sustainable systems of well-being. In other words, effective lawyers must treat their own physical and mental health with the same seriousness they bring to their client matters. Developing better habits makes healthier, stronger lawyers who have safer practices.

The Broader Takeaway

The NABRICO 2025 conference was a timely reminder that the challenges facing today's lawyers are multifaceted.

Rapid technological change, new forms of communication, and evolving client expectations have all raised the stakes. Yet through all of this, one truth remains constant: the foundation of good lawyering – and good risk management – starts with the well-being of the lawyer.

My takeaway from Bishop's presentation was that the best risk management strategies don't just live in continuing legal education programs or claims procedures. They live in habits, mindset, and self-care. Lawyers who are rested, clear-headed, and resilient are less likely to make errors, better equipped to communicate with clients, and more capable of handling the inevitable pressures of the profession.

For WILMIC, participating in conferences like NABRICO is about staying current with trends in the insurance industry. But it's also about deepening our understanding of how to support the lawyers we serve. It's a refreshing reminder that promoting the wellness practices and perspectives that make lawyers better, healthier people also helps prevent claims in the first place. **WL**

ENDNOTES

¹For five decades, Lawyers' Mutual Insurance Company [of California] has been the trusted legal malpractice insurance provider for thousands of California lawyers; <https://www.lawyersmutual.com/company/>.

²Jefferson Fisher, a Texas trial lawyer and founder of Fisher Firm, shared experiences as a trial lawyer and the art of persuading and communicating effectively in high-conflict situations; <https://www.jeffersonfisher.com>.

³Shary Belitz is a lawyer, litigation consultant and strategist, and owner and CEO of Shari Belitz Communications LLC, a company that provides mock trials, focus groups, jury selection, and other litigation consulting services to lawyers and insurance industry professionals; <https://www.sharibelitz.com/>.

⁴Beth Bishop describes herself as, "a former burned-out gym owner and entrepreneur, turned seven-figure CEO, keynote speaker, and corporate wellness strategist. My mission? To help high performers and top teams regulate stress, reclaim energy, and lead with clarity – without selling their souls to hustle culture;" <https://www.bethbishop.com/main>. **WL**

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