

Active AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED MEDICAL STAFF SECTION

Resolution: 1
(A-24)

Introduced by: Matthew Vo, MD

Subject: The AMA Will Actively Pursue Unionization/Collective Bargaining to Protect Patients' Quality of Care and Medical Staff

Referred to: OMSS Reference Committee
(xxxx, MD, Chair)

- 1 Whereas, The percentage of employed physicians is continuing to rise every year, likely
- 2 approaching 80 percent or greater this year; and
- 3
- 4 Whereas, Physicians continue to struggle with many problems, including administrative
- 5 burdens, EHR, scope creep, hostile work environments, and burnout; and
- 6
- 7 Whereas, Hospital systems are engaged in continuing efforts to gain more power and money by
- 8 eliminating physician practices, including by terminating contracts with independent
- 9 physicians/physician groups and replacing them with those friendly to the administration; and
- 10
- 11 Whereas, Hospital systems are continuing to find new ways to infringe on patients' quality of
- 12 care and medical staff rights by various practices such as firing medical staff and using private
- 13 equity firms to fill staffing (Including forcing primary care physicians to take on many more
- 14 patients and forcing physicians to sign off on the work of unsupervised non-physician providers);
- 15 and
- 16
- 17 Whereas, Hospital systems continue to make a lot of money, potentially in the billions of dollars,
- 18 through practices such as facility fees¹; and
- 19
- 20 Whereas, Burnout, reported by approximately 60 percent of physicians last year, continue to
- 21 worsen and we have yet to find ways to reduce this epidemic and ultimately improve physicians'
- 22 well-being and patients' quality of care; and
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- 24 Whereas, Physicians are increasingly forced into working for administration-friendly entities and
- 25 weary of speaking out about issues that can possibly antagonize the administration; and
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- 27 Whereas, Physicians are facing discrimination at work from the private equities' medical
- 28 directors. Verbal abuse happens on a regular basis, creating a lot of strife and potentially
- 29 leading to poor quality of care for patients. Physicians have reported name-calling and verbal
- 30 abuse from white male medical directors directed toward female and/or minority physicians and
- 31 other healthcare providers; and
- 32
- 33 Whereas, The AMA's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion compels us to address and
- 34 put an end to these kinds of hostile work environments; and
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- 36 Whereas, There have been many instances is physician unions successfully negotiating better
- 37 contracts with hospital systems, such as the contract negotiated by Kaiser physicians in 2023
- 38 and the residents of Los Angeles County Hospital a few years ago; therefore be it

- 1
- 2 Resolved, That our American Medical Association will urgently study the issues involved with
- 3 unionization and/or collective bargaining and make it a reality as soon as possible before
- 4 serious irreversible harm is done to physicians' practices and well-being and patients' quality of
- 5 care (Directive to Take Action).

Fiscal Note: TBD

Received: 4/1/2024

References:

1. Evans, M. (2024, March 5). Hospitals are adding billions in "facility" fees for routine care. *The Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/health/healthcare/hidden-hospital-fees-cost-patients-hundreds-of-dollars-0024cd95>
2. Davis, K. (2024, March 25). Ascension outsourcing Chicago-Area hospital workers to private equity-owned staffing firm. *Crain's Chicago Business*. <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/ascension-outsourcing-hospital-workers-private-equity-backed-firm>

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Supporting Efforts to Strengthen Medical Staffs Through Collective Actions and/or Unionization H-405.946

1. Our American Medical Association will: (1) reevaluate the various efforts to achieve collective actions and/or unionization for physicians nationally; and (2) request CEJA to review the advisory restricting collective action in section 1.2.10 of its Code of Medical Ethics to allow for more flexibility on the part of physicians who have exhausted other non-disruptive methods for reform.

Citation: Res. 016, A-23

Investigation into Residents, Fellows and Physician Unions D-383.977

Our AMA will study the risks and benefits of collective bargaining for physicians and physicians-in-training in today's health care environment.

Citation: Res. 606, A-19

Resident Physicians, Unions and Organized Labor H-383.998

Our AMA strongly advocates for the separation of academic issues from terms of employment in determining negotiable items for labor organizations representing resident physicians and that those organizations should adhere to the AMA's Principles of Medical Ethics which prohibits such organizations or any of its members from engaging in any strike by the withholding of essential medical services from patients.

Citation: CME Rep. 7, A-00; Reaffirmed: CME Rep. 2, A-10; Modified: Speakers Rep. 01, A-17; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. 13, A-19