

SUBJECT: PHYSICIAN RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

SUBMITTED BY: Bureau of Emerging Leaders

REFERRED TO: Ad Hoc Committee

1 WHEREAS, physicians across the United States often face challenges related to
2 excessive administrative burdens^{1,2}, inadequate compensation, rigid
3 employment contracts, burnout, and limited control over their work
4 environments; and

5 WHEREAS, the proportion of physicians employed by hospitals or corporate entities
6 has risen over 15% since 2019, with over 77% currently falling into this
7 category³; and

8 WHEREAS, physician compensation is increasing at a rate not commensurate with
9 inflation or cost of living increases^{1,4}; and

10 WHEREAS, collective bargaining and unionization can provide a way for physicians
11 to negotiate for fair wages, reasonable working conditions, improved patient
12 safety standards, and protections against exploitative practices; and

13 WHEREAS, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) currently supports the
14 rights of resident physicians to unionize and practice collective bargaining
15 [\(H346-A/2024\)](#); and

16 WHEREAS, the AOA is committed to promoting the welfare, professional
17 development, and autonomy of osteopathic physicians; now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, that the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) supports physicians
19 lawfully engaging in collective bargaining to protect professional and patient
20 interests and encourages constructive dialogue between physicians and
21 healthcare employers regarding working conditions, professional autonomy,
22 and patient care.

Explanatory Statement:

Physicians lead multidisciplinary teams and are ultimately responsible for patient care. In modern healthcare settings, however, many physicians practice within large organizational structures and are subject to administrative and operational decisions that significantly influence clinical environments. These realities shape how care is delivered and affect physicians' ability to consistently meet professional and ethical standards.

Supporting physicians who choose to engage in collective bargaining can strengthen their ability to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect patient safety, workplace conditions, and the sustainability of medical practice. A unified physician voice can help

address unsafe or inefficient work environments, reduce factors contributing to professional burnout, and promote balanced collaboration between physicians and healthcare organizations. These efforts are intended to support high-quality patient care and a stable healthcare workforce.

Any physician organizing or participating in collective bargaining activities must conduct themselves in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, while maintaining a commitment to continuity of care. AOA support of physicians who choose to engage in lawful collective action affirms the organization's commitment to patient-centered care, professional responsibility, and the long-term health of the medical profession.

References:

1. Rao SK, Kimball AB, Lehrhoff SR, et al. The impact of administrative burden on academic physicians: results of a hospital-wide physician survey. *Acad Med*. 2017;92(2):237-243. doi:10.1097/ACM.0000000000001461
2. Woolhandler S, Himmelstein DU. Administrative work consumes one-sixth of U.S. physicians' working hours and lowers their career satisfaction. *Int J Health Serv*. 2014;44(4):635-642.
3. Physicians Advocacy Institute & Avalere Health. *Hospital and Corporate Acquisition of Physician Practices and Physician Employment, 2019–2023*. Physicians Advocacy Institute, Apr. 2024, <https://www.physiciansadvocacyinstitute.org/Portals/0/assets/docs/PAI-Research/PAI-Avalere%20Physician%20Employment%20Trends%20Study%202019-2023%20Final.pdf>.
4. AMGA. "New AMGA Survey Notes Significant Gains in Physician Compensation." AMGA, June 2025, <https://www.amga.org/about-amga/newsroom/press-releases/2025/june/new-amga-survey-notes-significant-gains-in-physician-compensation>.

Background Information: Provided by AOA Staff

Current AOA Policy:

[H346-A/24 Supporting the Rights of Residents to Unionize](#)

Prior HOD action on similar or same topic: None

FISCAL IMPACT: \$0

ACTION TAKEN: _____

DATE: _____