

Letter to the Editor

RESIDENT PHYSICIAN UNIONIZATION EFFORTS

To the Editor:

I read with great interest the article "Physician Unionization: White Coats with Blue Collars?" by Ms. Nijm and Dr. Liang in the May 2001 issue of *Hospital Physician*.¹ The authors carefully underscore the fact that physicians can no longer ignore the political environment in which medicine is practiced and are increasingly seeking to unionize and achieve collective bargaining agreements in order to protect their profession. The article also clearly points out the numerous and daunting obstacles placed in the way of such efforts.

The authors, however, fail to take advantage of a great opportunity to detail the rich history of *resident* physician unionization efforts dating back to the 1950s in New York. In fact, the Committee of Interns and Residents, the largest and only national union run by and for resident physicians, is never mentioned in the

body of the article. The organization currently has 11,000 housestaff members nationwide, with members in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Florida, California, and Washington, DC. To illustrate the force of the resident physician unionization movement, we have organized 1000 new members in New York City during the first 6 months of 2001.

Those of us active in this movement know firsthand the value of resident unions in ensuring a voice for patient care, resident well being, and graduate medical education.

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Reference

1. Nijm LM, Liang BA. Physician unionization: white coats with blue collars? *Hosp Physician* 2001;37(5):71-5.

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