

# Program Director Announces Fair Wage for Residents... HAHA! Just Kidding!

The director of a well-regarded residency program created a stir this morning when he announced a significant wage increase for trainees. In an email to house staff, Dr. Joe King informed residents that they would begin to earn a salary commensurate with market value for highly skilled, doctorate level professionals working protracted hours in a [demanding environment](#).

A second email sent moments later from the same account stated simply, "Psych!"



When asked for comment on the announcement, Dr. King responded, "Just joshing you guys! We would never do that. [Ever](#)."

He added, "We already provide [meal cards](#) and [bathroom breaks](#). What more could they want?"

Despite the reversal, members of the medical community were quick to react to the story. Another program director not affiliated with the hospital in question commented, "What the heck are they thinking over there? Next thing you know residents will be asking for overtime and for the right to negotiate their contracts. Where does it end?"

Indeed, there is a growing sentiment amongst trainees that they deserve more than what they're currently receiving.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one [resident](#) from the program stated, "I've got more training than a mid-level and work twice as many hours, but somehow

I'm stuck making half as much. [Explain to me that math.](#)"

Academic medical centers are increasingly reliant on the relatively inexpensive labor provided by trainees. A paradigm shift in compensation structure would undoubtedly prove onerous for many institutions that have become accustomed to a ready supply of medical school graduates burdened with [debt](#) and no financial alternatives to residency training.

When pressed on the issue of resident salary, Dr. King dismissed the notion that residents are underpaid. "Salary, schmallery. Residents are compensated in [education](#). There's no dollar amount you can put on that," he said with a straight face.

A hospital administrator who works closely with the training program was similarly reluctant to entertain any question of impropriety or exploitation of resident labor. "Fairness is foremost in our minds when determining resident compensation. We typically set stipends based on historical precedent." He then pulled from his suit a pocket-sized history textbook and opened to a chapter on indentured servitude.

In the aftermath of the initial email, conversation on the topic reached such a pitch that Dr. Eve Lord, head of the [ACGME](#), felt compelled to weigh in.

"Residents are cherished assets to our health system. No doubt about it. As educators, we recognize their value and try as a group to collude—I mean collaborate—to determine what's fair compensation."

Dr. King echoed this sentiment, "We're making a killing and there's no way we're letting that go. Err—I mean—Patient safety! Education!"