

EDITORIAL

ANESTHESIOLOGY

Young anesthetists trained in modern technics are being solicited by hospitals for employment at attractive salaries. In some instances former anesthetists in these hospitals are being replaced when they are unwilling to change from a fee basis of payment to a full time salary. Hospital management is doing this with the aid of and possibly under pressure from the Blue Cross.

These changes should be examined in the light of the basic fact that an anesthetist is a practicing physician. He assumes charge of a clinical department of the hospital. To function adequately he must be a member of the staff.

If all members of the staff are chosen by the lay board without preliminary nomination by the professional staff, and if for their hospital services they are all paid salaries without reference to professional staff opinion, we shall expect lay control of professional work to extend still further with detrimental effect on the quality of medical care.

It behooves a young anesthetist to ask himself if he wishes to be an employee of the hospital administration, relying on himself alone to bargain with his employer concerning salary and conditions of employment. Would it not be well for him to insist on being nominated by the staff each year as are other members of the professional staff?

Whether payment for services is by salary or by fee is not so important. The whole staff can and should be in a position to see that payment is adequate, and that conditions of service are such as will render the patient the highest type of medical care.

The medical profession has ample cause to distrust the present powerful drive for active lay control of professional incomes. Our younger physicians should be cautious that they do not sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.

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