

Dear RWJMS Faculty Colleagues,

Since the end of contract negotiations in May 2023, our union and the Rutgers Administration have been in the process of negotiating a (FVS), or Fully Variable Supplement which would be an additional component of “incentive” pay for RWJMS Clinical faculty; the amount of which would vary based on clinical productivity. Since FVS would be paid year-round and not be subject to a cap, in theory it could put more money in RWJMS faculty pockets than the clinical incentive program (CIP) it is intended to replace. At the beginning of 2023, we had already agreed to implement an FVS at CINJ, which early results show was working favorably. (more on that later)

This new FVS was something the Administration and RWJBH badly wanted during the union contract negotiation, but the Administration’s FVS proposal at that time was risky and could have resulted in existing faculty pay decreasing. We did not feel that this was in the clinical faculty members’ best interest, which is why we agreed to reopen FVS negotiations soon after the contract was implemented.

In the summer of 2023, the Administration once again proposed an FVS. While it had some slight improvements from the prior version, it still was not something we felt was fair to most RWJMS Clinical faculty. For one, it relies on private sector (non-academic) clinical benchmarks, which we do not think are attainable for many clinicians in an academic environment. Within a few months, we responded with our own version based on MGMA Academic benchmarks that faculty are accustomed to seeing during annual productivity incentive payouts. We thought these benchmarks were more realistically achievable by most of our clinical faculty. Our proposal also extended the FVS to all clinical faculty, so that no departments would be left out. Finally, it created essential protected academic time.

Since November 2023, we have received no response from Rutgers leadership about our proposal other than "they are working on it." We have offered to meet them anytime and anywhere, but still no dates have been scheduled. We are disappointed to hear that Dean Murtha insinuated that FVS negotiations are progressing, when they have not been.

Additionally, in another demonstration of how the Administration tries to circumvent our contract and agreements, CINJ colleagues were told that this year's incentive would have a 25% compensation cap arbitrarily applied to it, even though that is not in the union agreement. This year 2024, we have also seen attempts at expanding clinical workload by increasing cFTEs and clinic sessions, decreasing time allotted for each patient, and moving to private sector 75% RVU benchmarks for evaluations.

We have lost our patience with an Administration that is determined to move ahead with increasing pressures on clinicians without satisfying their obligations to bargain with the union. Therefore, tomorrow, we will be filing a formal grievance on these issues to protect our rights and to show the Administration we will not take this lying down. We will need your support in the coming months to help us in our efforts to save our medical school from increasing attempts to corporatize all faculty time without any attention paid to our academic mission.

Sincerely,

Dr. Catherine Monteleone and Dr. Jeff Levine
AAUP-BHSNJ

