

# Our Bodies Matter

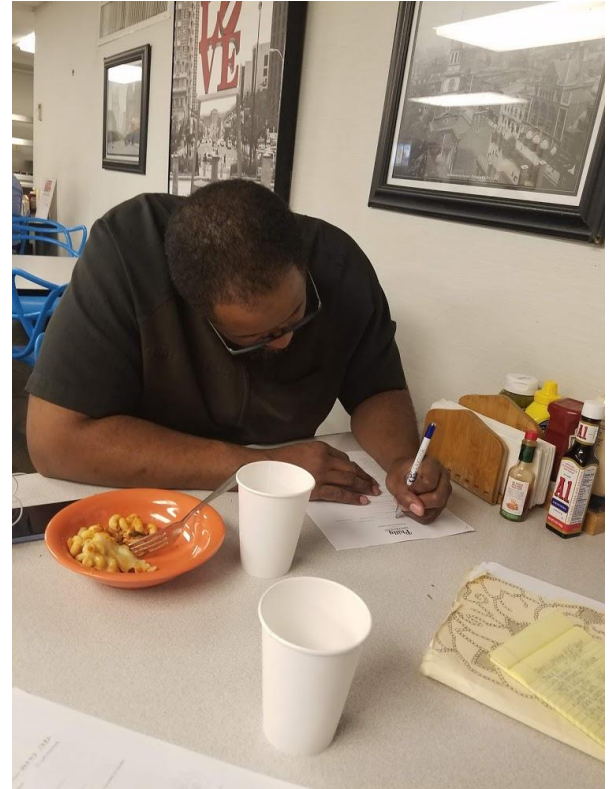
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Job Hazards and Pain Reported by Women Working in the  
Philadelphia Hotel Industry

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# Background

- Over 16,000 hotel rooms in Philadelphia County
- Unite Here Local 274 represents 15 hotels in Philadelphia
- Musculoskeletal injuries and sexual harassment are big issues in this industry
- Hotel workers are 48% more likely to be injured compared to other workers in the service sector



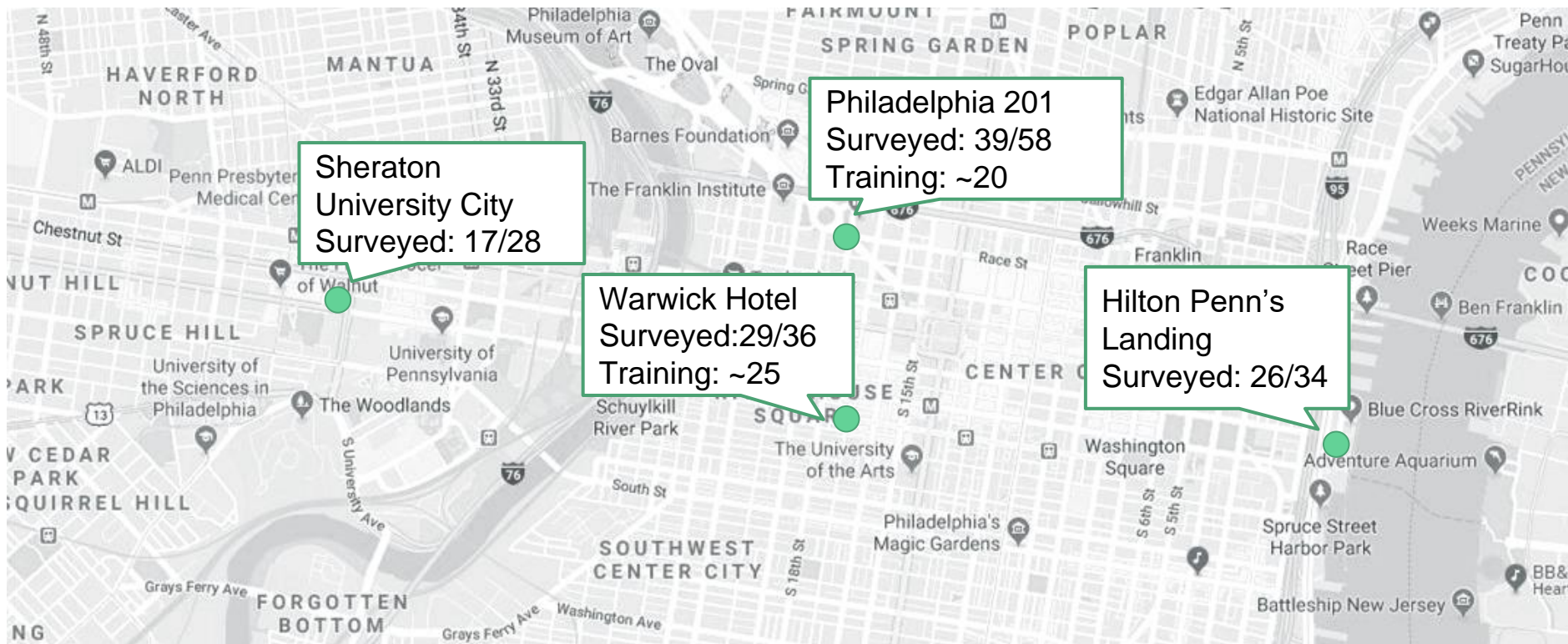
# Housekeeping Hazards

- Hotel rooms are designed for the comfort of guests, not that of workers
- In terms of ergonomic strain:
  - A housekeeper typically adopts a new position every three seconds, or about 8,000 in a eight-hour shift
  - Forceful movements in awkward positions
  - Making a king bed scores a 1.29 on the NIOSH lifting index
- Other hazards include:
  - Cleaning chemicals
  - Shift work
  - Time stress
  - Sexual harassment and working alone
  - Biological (bed bugs and human excretions)

# Objectives

- To survey 135 workers in the housekeeping department
  - At least 2/3 at each hotel we worked in
- To interview 3 workers at each hotel for the storytelling component
- Create and complete cafeteria trainings, report back on survey results
- Collect data that could be used in contract negotiations, to bring to light the pain and mistreatment of hotel housekeepers

# Methods



# Results

- 149 worker surveys, including 111 housekeeper surveys and more to be completed in next two weeks!
  - Remaining surveys were with housemen and laundry people
- Two cafeteria trainings completed, two planned
- Body charts, data analysis for use in contract negotiations, press conferences



# Results: Housekeeper Data

	Warwick Hotel (n=29)	Philadelphia 201 Hotel (n=39)	Hilton Penn's Landing (n=26)	Sheraton University City (n=17*)
Surveyed	81%	67%	76%	60%
Experiencing Pain	100%	90%	96%	88%
Lower Back Pain	86%	79%	85%	71%
Skipping breaks	N/A	77%	85%	88%

*\* Data incomplete, more surveys to be completed*

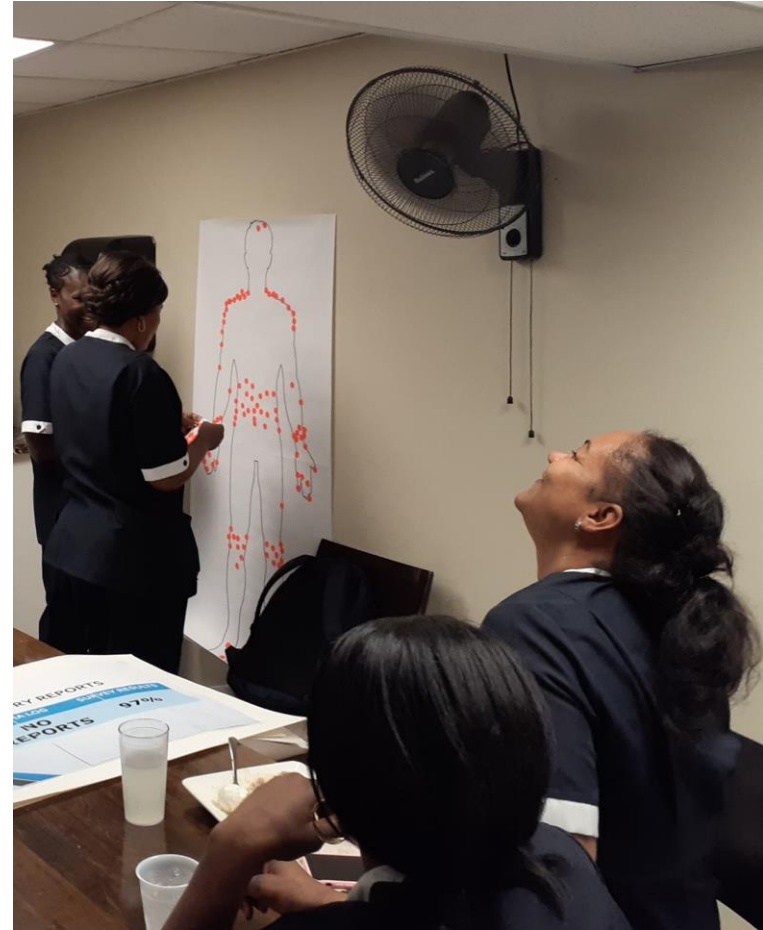
***“My doctor said the pain was from my job — but I already knew that”***

- Worker at the 201 Hotel



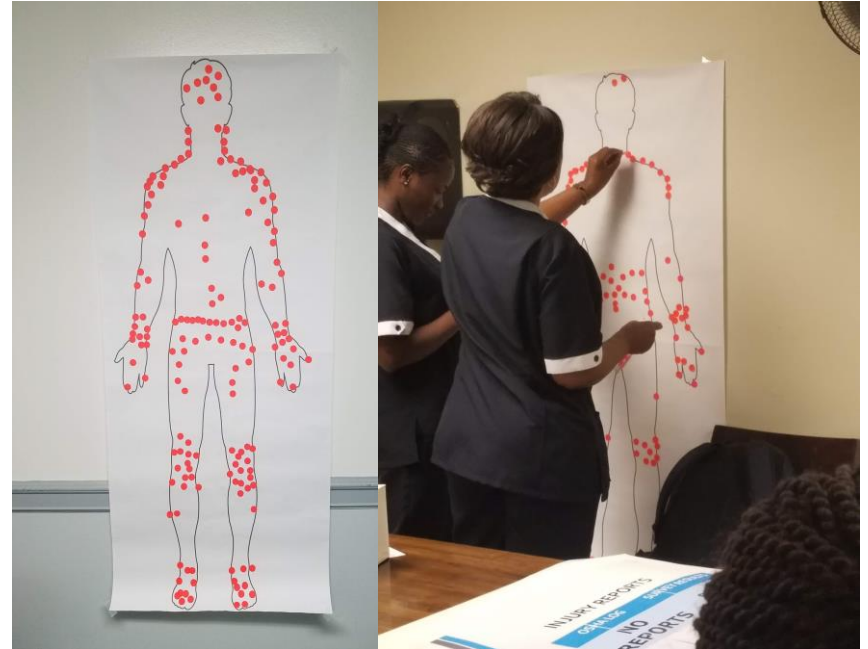
# Challenges

- Comparability of results between hotels
  - Different cleaning supplies, types of beds, size of hotel itself
- Different organizing strategies between hotels
- Difficulties reaching workers
  - Skipping lunch, schedule differences
- Workers not wanting to complete the surveys for various reasons
  - Dislike of the union, not wanting to be bothered, language barriers, not having time
- Difficulty with sexual harassment questions



# Successes

- Organizers played a huge role in helping us obtain completed surveys
- Body chart used in contract negotiations
- In our time at Local 274, we attended:
  - 3 contract negotiating sessions at two hotels
  - 2 rallies [nursing union at Hahnemann Hospital]
  - A 2- day training with organizers from other states
  - Picketing/leafleting at PHL
  - Picket at the 201



# Recommendations

Informing hotel guests  
about worker pain  
from housekeeping



Fewer rooms  
per worker



Less  
pain and  
rushing

Identifying  
chronic pain as a  
workplace injury



Pairing workers  
together



# Give-Back Product: Summary Fact Sheets

- Reference sheets for union summarizing results for each hotel and overall
- Supports union proposals in contract negotiations
  - Room drops
  - Fair scheduling
- Talking points for press conferences and releases



# Personal Reflections

Lillian: This experience really gave me an insight into the way that regulations really impact people. Not being able to easily report musculoskeletal injuries has profound consequences for the people were working with.

Chelsi: Before OHIP, it never occurred to me the pain housekeepers feel when they return home from work and realize their house needs cleaning too.



# Acknowledgements

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