American Medical Association

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~~Special Letter~~

AMA - NMA
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Leonidas Berry, M. D.
Suite 26
412 East 47th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60653

Dear Doctor Berry:

I offer congratulations to you on completion of your year as President of the National Medical Association and commend you for your energetic efforts.

As I am sure you will agree, some progress was made in understanding the complicated problems related to racial discrimination in medicine. In part, this improvement was brought about by constructive discussions and the work of leaders in NMA and AMA. At the staff level, every effort has been made to be helpful. I hope that such efforts will continue as necessary in the future.

Too, I feel certain you will agree that the status of Negro physicians cannot be consistently improved by downgrading and damaging the American Medical Association. As an organization, I believe it is the greatest single group which can further the cause of all physicians regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin. While I appreciate the individual right to express personal feelings, real progress cannot be made by allowing such feelings to dominate and govern tactics. To do so can lead to misunderstandings and the halting of progress.

Only yesterday, I received a communication from a prominent leader in medicine suggesting that relationships and liaison with NMA be broken off in view of certain publicized statements made by leaders of the National Medical Association regarding the American Medical Association and its efforts against discrimination.

Dangerous racial tensions are building up in groups outside of medicine. The explosive dimensions of these pent-up feelings have to be handled carefully by all responsible citizens; otherwise, great damage to life and property could ensue. If such should happen, racial relations will be seriously impaired. Men and women in medicine have a responsibility to try to avoid such a catastrophe.

I am enclosing a reprint of an article from the August 7 issue of the New York Times and believe that you will find the contents thought-provoking.

Best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

F. J. L. Blasingame

F. J. L. Blasingame, M. D.

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Enclosure

cc: Lester D. Bibler, M. D.
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