

PROGRESS IN NMA-AMA RELATIONSHIPS  
NEW PROGRAMS FOR COOPERATIVE ASSAULT ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION  
IN MEDICINE LAUNCHED

*file  
Liaison Committee*

*Apr. 1, 1966*

At a four-hour meeting held at the national headquarters of the American Medical Association in Chicago on April 1, 1966, members of the Liaison Committee of the National Medical Association were luncheon guests of the entire Trustee Board of the AMA. The meeting was undoubtedly the most comprehensive and meaningful, in terms of the number of top-level AMA and NMA officials in attendance and the facets of discrimination discussed, ever held by the two organizations. This certainly applies to the half dozen that the writer has attended over the years. There was far less of the atmosphere of a debating society. There was little time spent in decrying the existence of the problems or making excuses for them. More time was spent in actual planning their solutions. AMA trustees from the deep south led the way, followed by others from broadly represented geographic areas, in expressing their sincere desire to openly attack racial discrimination in medicine in the north and south. The conference was the fourth significant antidiscrimination meeting held by the two organizations since the beginning of their current administrations. The first, a liaison meeting on September 27, 1965, at which time a summary of nine points was agreed upon and submitted to the respective Trustee Boards. On February 5, 1966, the AMA Board of Trustees adopted, or approved in principle, all nine points. There were three which were modified. But, with reference to these three

in particular and the total problem in general, the Board voted to invite the NMA Liaison Committee to be received by the entire AMA Board as luncheon guests for the next liaison conference, to be held at AMA headquarters.

The NMA Board of Trustees had its semi-annual meeting in Chicago on February 12-13, 1966, and voted to adopt the nine points and to approve the AMA invitation. The NMA Board further approved their president's recommendation for a similar invitation to a group from the AMA as luncheon guests of the NMA Board at a time of mutual convenience. Agreement on the following cooperative programs was culminated at the luncheon meeting which was held on April 1, 1966.

1. AMA will appoint a special committee to develop an "aggressive program to end voluntarily discrimination in medical and hospital services." (Approved in executive session by AMA Board). NMA will continue its work in the same area through its Council on Medical Education and Hospitals.
2. That successful voluntary efforts in solving the problems of discrimination on hospital professional staffs be documented and distributed to state and metropolitan county medical societies of both organizations.
3. That the NMA and AMA cooperate in bringing to the attention of constituent and component societies of AMA alleged cases of discrimination and, where indicated, support corrective measures.
4. That the AMA urge the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals to expand its criteria and insistence on considering evidences of discrimination of staff and patients in accreditation of hospitals.
5. That the AMA invite the NMA to submit the names of qualified Negro doctors who are AMA members for consideration by the Board of Trustees in making appointments to AMA committees, and that curriculum vitas be submitted for each nomination.
6. That the NMA and the AMA jointly develop a recruitment

program to enlist more qualified Negroes to enter the fields of medical practice, research, technology, and nursing.

7. With reference to Medicare and other government programs, it is jointly agreed that plans will be worked out for a racially unbiased implementation at local levels for improvement and preservation of established equitable principles of medical practice.
8. That liaison meetings between the two associations continue to be held at frequent intervals, these intervals to be determined by the presidents of the NMA and AMA.

Presidents James Appel and Leonidas H. Berry served as co-chairman at the meeting on September 27, 1965, and Board Chairman Percy Hopkins and President Leonidas H. Berry were co-chairman at the April 1, 1966, meeting.

The NMA president, who serves as chairman of the NMA Liaison Committee, has already notified the office of Equal Health Opportunity of HEW and others of these joint programs - and pledges to continue his efforts forthrightly for their implementation.

Fifteen names of Negro doctors, in good standing as AMA and NMA members, were collected by NMA Liaison Committee to be submitted to AMA with curriculum vitae for possible appointment or election to AMA Trustee Board and House of Delegate committees and councils. Any other such interested and qualified doctor may submit requests and credentials through the president of NMA.