

September 4, 1965

Honorable Ivan A. Nestingen,
Deputy Director
Health, Education and Welfare
HEW Building Rm. 5246
Washington, D. C. 20201

Dear Mr. Nestingen:

Since I last saw and talked to you, I have been installed as president of the National Medical Association for the year 1965-'66.

You may or may not have heard reports on the program which I have instituted for the year; namely, that of a vigorous program of integrating the membership of the National Medical Association. Symbolic of this effort is the fact that we named as honorary members of the Society in our recent convention Dr. Charles W. Mayo, Emeritus Chairman of Surgical Section, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, and Dr. Henry N. Harkins, Chairman, Department of Surgery, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash. The third honorary membership was given to Dr. Walter M. Booker, professor and head of Department of Pharmacology, Howard University, a Negro doctor.

It is my feeling, and I think that we were successful in getting the point over to our membership at the recent convention, that the NMA can play an important role as the clear voice of progressive thinking in the extension of medical care and in the implementation of the Medicare Program during the months and years ahead. It may be interesting to you to know that as a result of our efforts in these areas, we carried to Cincinnati the names of more than forty outstanding white doctors, most of whom are on the faculties of outstanding medical schools -- to name some of them: Harvard, Yale, Cornell, University of Maryland, Tufts, University of California, University of Chicago. Others among these applicants are commissioners of health for counties and states.

I have just addressed a letter to the President and to Dr. Gardner, offering the services of the National Medical Association in any advisory capacity which may be deemed advisable, with reference to working out the problems of implementation or otherwise fostering the equitable carrying out of the program of Medicare, or any other health project which may be on the national agenda. I felt that this should also be mentioned to you.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very truly yours,

Leonidas H. Berry, M.D., Pres.
National Medical Association

LHB/ld