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COOK COUNTY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

INCORPORATED NOT FOR PROFIT

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November 25, 1970

Mr. Arthur Reed
Mr. Donald Rumsfeld
Director
Office of Economic Opportunity
1200 - 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Mr. Rumsfeld:

I am writing to acquaint you with a community project in Illinois which has addressed itself to the health care problem and race relations in beleaguered Cairo, Illinois. A group of some 35 medical specialists -- registered nurses, medical technicians, medical social workers, nutritionists and clerks have been involved.

I am writing you because you may not be acquainted with the impact made by the "Flying Black Medics" on the State and some parts of the nation with their health survey and one-day health conference and clinic in Cairo several months ago. I have a second and most important reason for writing you. After this community voluntary conference with the cooperation of ministers and congregations of several African Methodist churches, the OEO office in Chicago headed by Mr. Robert Fulton, manifested great interest in providing preliminary funds for the continuation and further study of this health service approach for southern Illinois. The project which was carried out by Chicago physicians who chartered two 16-seat planes and enlisted the voluntary help of allied professionals was covered by every newspaper in the City of Chicago and many throughout the State. As the news media heard about our project they were anxious to give coverage. NBC television news taped our all-day project activities in the basement of the Ward Chapel AME Church in Cairo where we serviced 200 poor people from early morning until late in the night. Telecasts were sent out nationwide the next day from the "To-Day" Show in New York and the "Huntley-Brinkley News" report in the afternoon. The State Medical Society, State Hospital Association, Director of the State Department of Public Health and the Governor's special health advisor, all expressed their interest and the feeling that something unique could come out of the continuation and

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development of this kind of mobile clinic^{To be} kept in operation by alternating medical teams flying down to Cairo and with the promised help of the faculty of Meharry Medical College using senior medical students and faculty supervisors. The "Flying Black Medics" tentatively agreed for alternating teams, specialists, nurses, medical technicians, etc. every two weeks.

Further plans included the establishment of a governing interracial commission composed of Cairo citizens, plus outside citizens perhaps from the faculty of the University of Southern Illinois and some of the medical group from Chicago. The citizens outside of Cairo would serve as a "buffer" in developing a cooperative program with local city and county health officials in this racially torn community.

The tentative proposals which were agreed upon in several conferences involving Mr. Fulton and his staff -- Sister Joan Marie, Administrator, local St. Mary's Hospital; a couple of Black community leaders of Cairo and representatives of the "Flying Black Medics."

A symposium and workshop was held in Cairo on imaginative and newer techniques of bringing better health care to the Black and white poor of Pulaski and Montgomery Counties. This workshop was held in the Ward Chapel AME Church in Cairo with a large community audience attending. Members of the panel included Black leaders in Cairo; professor and chairman, Department of Medicine of Meharry Medical College; president and director of the Williams Clinic in Chicago; other doctors from Chicago who have been involved in the development of community health care centers, etc. The plan tentatively approved in conferences set-up in Chicago by Mr. Fulton included the development of a clinic in a white housing project, another clinic in a Black housing project with services coordinated in the local St. Mary's Hospital in Cairo. These efforts would be designed to escalate the services of the Hospital and hopefully to improve race relations through the vicarious instrument of better biracial health care. It was made very clear that our first effort as well as all other were directed to the poor, white as well as Black -- only 2 white patients came to the first clinic session.

For some unknown reason after considerable encouragement and a tentative promise of perhaps \$50,000 of OEO funds to get the project started, there is suddenly no meaningful communication between local OEO and the voluntary interested citizens in the Illinois community. This has been somewhat shocking because of the much expressed desire from Federal government agencies in recent years for partnership efforts with community groups and secondly, because it was learned that many thousands of dollars of OEO funds have been assigned but unused in the Cairo area because medical help could not be acquired by traditional methods.

It has been suggested that the Washington headquarters have not been giving the new administration of the Chicago Office the kind of support which is commensurate with the State wide interest, citizens' voluntary efforts and the medical need. I am enclosing herewith printed programs, photographs, and articles further describing the project of the "Flying Black Medics" and hope that you may find the

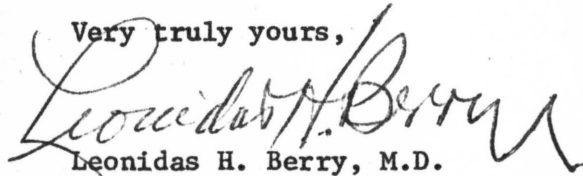
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time to analyze it. The president and faculty at Meharry have expressed their willingness to help set-up a mobile type clinic such as that which they already operate in rural Mississippi. Some students and faculty at the University of Illinois have expressed further willingness and interest. Many doctors and allied professionals are continuing to inquire of the "Flying Black Medics" as to when there will be another such flight and expressing their desire to join.

There are many of us, including ministers of the church group which purchased medicines and health supplies which were distributed, are wondering if this would be just another community effort floundered because of failure to get government agency support by federal programs which clearly should be involved. Any support that can come from your office to back up the apparently unsupported efforts of the Chicago Office will be greatly appreciated by many citizens of the State of Illinois.

Very truly yours,



Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.
President and Organizer
Flying Black Medics and
Past President
National Medical Association

LHB:db

encs.

Copy to:	Mr. Frank Kent	Dr. Thomas Bryant
	Director	Director
	Human Rights Division	Office of Health Affairs
	Office of Economic Opportunity	Office of Economic Opportunity
	1200 - 19th Street, N.W.	1200 - 19th Street, N.W.
	Washington, D.C. 20506	Washington, D.C. 20506

P.S.:

The accompanying set of supporting photographs, news releases, etc. are for your information and it is hoped that Mr. Kent and Dr. Bryant may have access to the contents of this folder. You may return them when no longer needed.

B.C.: Senator Charles Percy
Senate Office Building, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Adlai Stevenson, III