



For Immediate Release

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NMA ACCEPTS AMA APOLOGY FOR HISTORY OF RACIAL INEQUALITY

WASHINGTON, July 10—The National Medical Association (NMA) today accepted the apology of the American Medical Association (AMA) for acknowledging its history of racial inequality that kept its doors closed to African American physicians for more than a century.

“We commend the AMA for taking this courageous step and coming to grips with a litany of discriminatory practices that have had a devastating effect on the health of African Americans,” said Nelson L. Adams, MD, NMA’s President. “In fact, the NMA owes its very existence, in part, to these inequities which forced African American physicians to found their own membership organization.”

NMA leaders said AMA’s legacy of discrimination has contributed to health disparities for African Americans that continue today.

“These persistent, race-based health disparities have led to a precipitous decline in the health of African Americans when compared to their white counterparts and the population as a whole,” said Nedra H. Joyner, M.D., Chair of the Board of Trustees of the NMA.

Dr. Joyner said African Americans disproportionately suffer from chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

“In accepting this apology for past wrongs, it is important we seize this opportunity to move forward to correct these injustices,” said Dr. Joyner.

Dr. Adams called on the AMA to work with the NMA on their three initiatives:

- An effort to actively recruit more African Americans into the medical profession;
- A commitment to reduce health disparities among African Americans and other communities of color;
- A requirement for medical schools and medical licensing to make cultural competency mandatory with an emphasis on cultural competency training for all health professions and make training mandatory for medical students, residents and practicing physicians.

“Mandatory training in cultural competency would provide physicians with the cultural knowledge, behaviors, and interpersonal and clinical skills that would enhance their effectiveness in managing patient care, and would begin to eliminate the health disparities that take a deadly toll on millions of African Americans and other people of color,” said Dr. Adams.

Dr. Adams called AMA's apology a "historic opportunity" to begin to right the wrongs of the past.

"Let's not make the same mistakes again and have history repeat itself," Dr. Adams concluded. "Now is the time to move forward and begin serving all patients, regardless of race, creed or color, with the highest medical care possible."

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