A Doctor’s Prescription for Healthcare Reform

By Rahn Kennedy Bailey, MD, DFAPA, ACP

Rahn Kennedy Bailey, MD, DFAPA, ACP, the 113th President of the National Medical Association (NMA), released this book in August 2013 highlighting the NMA history of advocacy in health care. Dr. Bailey made the announcement at the NMA Convention & Assembly in Toronto. The book was titled: A Doctor’s Prescription for Health Care Reform: The National Medical Association Tackles Disparities, Stigma and the Status Quo. (www.baileypsych.com) "As an African-American physician, I have spent the last two decades of my career working to make the lives of people better," Dr. Bailey said about his reason to write the book. "The more I’ve learned about health care in our country, the more I have realized the need for operative change. I became acutely aware of the topics addressed through my work in hospitals, health care centers, and assisting members of disadvantaged groups."

This book examines long term struggles in addressing health care disparities among races and health stigma in the African-American community, such as the community’s view on mental illness/psychiatric disease. Further, it touches on hot button news topics of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), global health, and gun violence.

"The book takes a physician’s look at the ACA, how it will affect the poor, ethnic minorities, and others who feel they have been marginalized by the system," Dr. Bailey said when he wrote the book. "The ACA will become even more newsworthy in the next couple of years as it becomes fully implemented, as well as the ever changing impact of gun violence. I speak about why it is a medical issue."

Dr. Bailey is the Chairman of the Board of the W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute, the research arm of the NMA. It is the Foundation which has as a primary purpose the elimination of healthcare disparities. In addition, it specifies key areas of focus to address. Currently, the signature themes which are: gun violence, diabetes/obesity, HIV and CVD/Stroke. Founded in 1895, the NMA is the largest organization of African American physicians in the country. He said he hopes the book, which is a culmination of his nearly three decades in organized medicine, will bring discussion of health care, the need for reform, and the proper attention to prevention/safety which is essential in our society.

This book is written by a physician who works with many patients whom the Affordable Care Act attempts to address. Those persons historically disenfranchised from access, have been those most likely to receive inferior health care. Those include women, ethnic minorities, and children. This is a health equity issue. I intend to share my professional experience, personal views, and accumulated insight about the current state of health care in the country." We have the means to address this problem directly; we should and must discuss it more openly.


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