

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION'S VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA.

In Critical Health No. 4 we mentioned that the American Medical Association (AMA) would be visiting South Africa to assess the South African medical services. We postulated that the AMA would focus on such questions as: "Are South African doctors properly trained?", and "Is hospital and private practice of sufficiently high standard?", and not the most vital question... "Is the South African health system meeting the needs of all her people?"

Part of the reason for the visit was to give support to the Medical Association of South Africa's (MASA) application to join the World Medical Association. Professor De Klerk, Chairperson of the Federal Council of MASA said: "We are almost back in the fold again because these gentlemen (AMA) have gone in to bat for us."

As we foresaw, the response of the AMA was to acknowledge the good training of medical personnel:

SA medicine praised

Dr James Sammons, one of five delegates of the American Medical Association visiting South Africa, said the Republic could be proud of its medical services.

He said: "In South Africa we can learn a lot about various aspects of medical care, such as financing manpower utilisation and the organisation of a complex such as Groote Schuur, which has many services."

It is the second visit to South Africa by American doctors to study medical practice.

Die Burger, March 4

Health care tops

South African health and care services were as good as those in America, an official of the American Medical Association said in Johannesburg.

Dr James H Sammons, executive vice-president of the AMA, said the world's best medical services were to be found in the US, South Africa, Canada and Australia, with West Germany following closely.

Pretoria News, February 28

The group notably declined to comment on South African hospital overcrowding or the treatment of detainees, because of their "lack of knowledge".

This was the type of response we expected from this group and it is obvious that they ignored (or were not shown) the desperate lack of health facilities in rural areas and black urban areas.

Again we condemn the breaking of the International academic boycott of South Africa by the American Medical Association's delegation, who sought not the truth about the state of health in South Africa, but to support the existing inequalities.