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Dr. Severine Brocki
Director or Officer of Health Policy Development
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, ILL 60610

Dear Dr. Brocki:

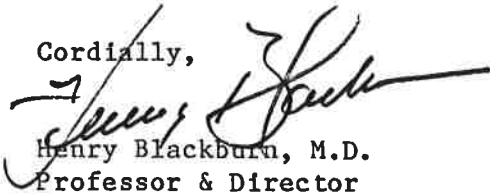
It seems to me that one of the main problems about the Health Policy Agenda for the American People, and by the American Medical Association, is its lack of awareness of issues of the public health, including disease prevention and the promotion of health. Though you use the term Health Care throughout, you are only referring to Medical Care or Illness Care. I am sure that this AMA thinking and emphasis cannot be turned around. But the fact that none of the 41 issue areas involves education of physicians to preventive concepts, caring for health behavior, advice for the health behavior of patients, or for the physician's role in a population strategy of public health and prevention is a major and long-term deficiency in American Medical Association policy.

Those of us who have felt that the AMA was for many years totally out of touch with real health needs in this country, have been delighted to see "The New AMA," including its policy interest and strong statements on smoking. However, the AMA still has only the individual physician and patient in mind and is still concerned with only the medical model of patient care. Should it not at least address the role of the health profession in the public health, in a population model, in which societal needs, population influences on health, and cultural issues impinge on education, practice and policy efforts of the profession?

I found nothing in the Health Policy Agenda for the American People that would encourage me that our profession would seek to improve itself in its preventive and health promotion strategies. If "The New AMA," and its re-dedication to excellence, is intended truly "to promote the science and art of medicine and the betterment of public health," then it is past time that Health Policy for the American people, in which the AMA sets itself up as leader, addresses the betterment of the public health, rather than just the development of better medical care.

Certainly, the editorial on "The New AMA" and the AMA issues in public health and preventive medicine are encouraging. It would be great to see those initiatives included in the Health Policy of the AMA.

Cordially,



Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor & Director

HB/do

cc: Ray W. Gifford, M.D.
John Koury, M.D.
Jean Forster