

EDITORIAL

RESOLUTION 56.

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In June of 1982 the American Medical Association's House of Delegates adopted the infamous **résolution 56** against the advice of their own Reference Committee. Simply stated this Resolution recommended to all State Medical Licensing Boards that they require all their applicants to be graduates of medical schools accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (i.e. domestic medical schools) and imposed on all Foreign Medical Graduates the onus and burden of proving that their medical school meets equivalent standards and performance evaluation requirements, to those of domestic schools.

This resolution caught little attention of most of the Foreign Medical Graduates, most of whom it affected drastically. If accepted by a State Licensing body as enacted, it gave it powers to deny Licensing to any Foreign Medical Graduate who could not prove that his/her medical school met the same standards as a domestic medical school in the U.S. Moreover because of lack of definition it could be applied to all FMG's who applied for Licensure whether they were new applicants or the one's that had their license up for renewal.

This, as expected, met with strong disapproval by all organizations that represented the FMC's. After much representation it was amended to exclude the graduates of Foreign Medical schools that already have their License to practice Medicine.

The Resolution was not only unnecessary but also it was contrary to the Current Opinions of the Judicial Council of the A.M.A. as defined in Section 9.02, 1981 and as Stated hereunder:

"The American Medical Association is in favour of equality of opportunity in medical society activities, medical education and training, employment and all other aspects of medical professional endeavors regardless of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic affiliation, national origin, or sex.

The American Medical Association is unalterably opposed to the denial of membership privileges and responsibilities in county medical societies and state medical associations to any duly licensed physician because of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic affiliation, national origin or sex.

The American Medical Association calls upon the Medical Profession and all individual members of the American Medical Association to exert every effort to end any instance in which such equal rights, privileges or responsibilities are denied."

It was also contrary to the highest laws of this great country, including the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States. It also contravened other laws viz: the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the civil rights act and the Sherman anti-trust act.

This resolution was thus totally unwarranted and was directed against the minority, albeit a sizable minority of the medical manpower in the U.S.A., namely the Foreign Medical Graduates who constitute about 20-25% of the Licensed physicians.

The Islamic Medical Association has been extremely concerned about these changes taking place in the heart of the biggest organized medical body representing physicians in this country. Hence it placed this matter on a high priority as one that needed immediate attention. At the last annual convention of the I.M.A. a total session was devoted to this important topic and other similar matters which are drastically affecting the F.M.G.'s. The I.M.A. also invited for a heart to heart discussion prominent members representing various associations which form Organized Medicine in this country. Notable amongst these were Frank J. Jirka, Jr., M.D., President of the A.M.A., Samuel R. Asper, M.D., President of The E.C.F.M.G., and representatives of the Federation of State Licensing Boards. It was at this forum we expressed our fears and

doubts, emotionally presented the plight of those that are directly affected and asked them their opinions and solutions. Thus these representatives got first hand information of conditions affecting F.M.G.'s which they thought did not exist!

The Resolutions that resulted from the discussion and debate were unanimously adopted by the General Body of IMA and directed to be sent to those that represent the pillars of organized medicine in this country. They appear in this issue and I hope you will take a few moments to read them because it is your voice that they represent!

The lessons to be learnt from Resolution 56 are: That we should make our organization strong both numerically and financially. Large memberships have a stronger voice and are more likely to be heard. Unless we present a united front many more such resolutions are likely to be passed under our very noses and although they may affect us and our future we are unlikely to be able to do anything about them. We must thus urge you to become a member of the Islamic Medical Association to represent you, and keep a constant vigil on protecting your rights and liberties, which this great nation was born to uphold.

We should also congratulate other organizations which represent our interests like the American College of International Physicians, of which we are an organizational member and we must support them financially and in other respects. Dr. Antonia B. Donesa, executive director of the A.C.I.P. and his efforts need special commendation.

We should not be content with developing our own practices and being satisfied with professional achievements. We should endeavor to participate in Organized Medicine. We should take an active part in committees at all levels including hospital committees, county medical societies, state medical societies and national organizations. We should be actively involved in the local, regional and national politics, be involved with the legislative process and be ready to know and defend our rights by the judicial process. We should learn from the very roots of the "Declaration of Independence:" *"But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."*

May Allah help us!