

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
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“Where There Is Unity, There Is Strength”

June 23, 2020

Dr. Michael Schottenstein
President, Ohio State Medical Board
30 E. Broad Street, 3rd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Dr. Schottenstein,

On behalf of the members of the Dayton Unit of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), I write with urgent concern about the conduct of state senator and medical doctor Stephen A. Huffman who is licensed to practice medicine here in the state of Ohio. Senator Huffman displayed extremely poor judgment and a dangerous insensitivity to Black Ohioans when he remarked at a committee hearing on the subject of racism as a public health crisis as follows: "Could it just be that African Americans – or the colored population – do not wash their hands as well as other groups? Or wear masks? Or do not socially distance themselves?" His remarks came during questioning of Angela Dawson, Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, an accomplished Black woman with two masters degrees in counseling and rehabilitation. We urge you to investigate Dr. Huffman and revoke his license to practice medicine in this state.

All Ohioans and especially Black Ohioans interacting with our health care system must be protected from doctors like Huffman. His conduct shows him to be incompetent to treat patients with fairness, empathy, and the appropriate duty of care that all people deserve. Huffman has already been dismissed from one of his employers, but we know that bad actors like him often just move on to a new place of employment where they can continue to do harm, particularly to Black Ohioans. In fact, state ethics disclosures by Senator Huffman show that he receives income from at least 23 different organizations for medical services, three of which paid him over \$100,000 last year. It is not enough for one employer to take action to stop Huffman from having access to patients. The State Medical Board must take action to revoke the license of Dr. Huffman so that all potential employers are on notice and so he cannot harm anyone else in Ohio. In addition, his cases should be reviewed and his patients notified so that anyone who received inadequate or tainted treatment from Huffman can seek a second opinion from a provider who will properly recognize their humanity.

State Senator Steve Huffman has the privilege of holding a state senate seat that was once held by Ohio Conference NAACP President Tom Roberts. Former Senator Roberts also serves as Second Vice President to the Dayton Unit NAACP. In this role, Huffman represents Black communities who unquestionably deserve better from their state lawmaker. The constituents of Senate District 5 deserve the fair and just service that was provided to them by former Senator Roberts.

The NAACP as a national organization is committed to achieving health equality for Black Americans who have historically been deprived of equal access and equal treatment. Our mission is to ensure Black Americans have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare and to end racially disparate health outcomes. Sadly, reputable studies have confirmed that Black Americans are not believed when they describe their pain and, consequently, their health and even lives are endangered by the persistent biases they encounter in health care.

Fair and equal access to healthcare that recognizes each person's full humanity and potential is part of the NAACP's mission to ensure equal political, educational, social, and economic rights for all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. By eliminating the racial and ethnic inequities that exist within our health care system we will expand the life opportunities for the people in our Black communities and maximize their ability to contribute fully to the common good.

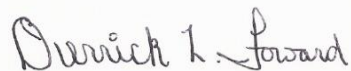
We ask that the Ohio State Medical Board immediately investigate Dr. Huffman's ability to effectively practice medicine under the high standards that we demand for our state and our people. We believe his ability to practice is impaired by his bias and racism. There is precedent for the Board to take action when a doctor has made public comments revealing their dangerous racism and biases against entire groups of people. Just last summer, the Board cited a doctor for conduct related to similarly offensive statements. Please apply the same standards here. The Board must take action to ensure that no patients are exposed to his dangerous attitude and conduct. It cannot simply be swept under the rug. It is in the best interest of all Ohio communities to remove Dr. Huffman from Ohio's healthcare systems.

Huffman's used an offensive term to describe Black Ohioans and also invoked a racist stereotype suggesting that black people are dirty, a dehumanizing stereotype that was part of justifying the worst abuses and torment of Black people throughout America's history. The resurgence of such language in the year 2020 is an abomination. And we say no more. There will be no free passes for such ignorant and harmful behavior from those entrusted with the privilege and duty to care for their fellow human beings.

We look forward to your response in writing by Tuesday, June 30, 2020.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and we will be following up quickly to ensure that action is taken with all due speed.

Your community servant,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derrick L. Foward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'F'.

Dr. Derrick L. Foward
President
Dayton Unit NAACP