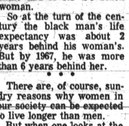
HEALTH IN ACTION

# Working men seen needing improved medical services

By DR. PAUL B. CORNELY

Pity the poor black male. He is the truly "battered adult" of our affluent society.



DR. PAUL CORNELY

When it comes to health care, his problems are similar to those he faces in other areas — except in this instance it is a matter of life and death.

His health is the poorest in the nation.

Now if that were not bad enough, add the fact that among those of us who have the greatest need for better health services, the deck again would seem to be stacked in favor of others.

For a clearer view of how bad things are, consider that the black male in 1967 could expect to live a little over 61 years as contrasted to about 68 years for whites. That's a significant difference.

Women of his own race enjoyed a similar life gap over the black male, her life expectancy in 1967 being 67.4 years. White women far outstripped everyone with 75.1 years of life expectancy.

Each class has shown big improvements since 1900 when the black male, still at the bottom of the health pile, could expect a life span of about 33 years against 48 for the white male, 51 for the white female and 35 for the black woman.

So at the turn of the century the black man's life expectancy was about 2 years behind his woman's. But by 1967, he was more than 6 years behind her.

* * *

There are, of course, sundry reasons why women in our society can be expected to live longer than men.

But when one looks at the way black women have pulled ahead of black men over the last six or so decades, there are some health care handicaps that the society seems to impose on the black man of modest means that should be removed.

Visit any health clinic and take a good look at who is there for treatment.

If your experience shows what I have found in my many visits to such health centers, you will find mostly women and children lined up to see their doctors.

Relatively few black men are to be seen taking advantage of these free or relatively cheap health services.

This should not be the case. Public health agencies could do a number of things to increase the use of health facilities by poor, black men.

One simple thing would be to set up hours, during the evening or on weekends, that would make it possible for the working man to get needed medical treatment at these clinics and health centers.

Men who have not been accustomed to yearly health checkups and frequent visits to see a physician have to be regularly encouraged by all available means to use clinics, just as women and children are now.

Every statistic on population growth, housing needs, education or income levels point out the wisdom of our making new efforts to improve the health of the black male.

Although economic progress has been made, it is still true that in 1967 over 35 per cent of the black people of this country, and 31 per cent of their families, fall into the poverty category. Similar figures for whites are 10.3 and 8 per cent.

* * *

It is also noteworthy to point out that the black population is growing younger at a faster rate than is the white, having dropped from a median age of 23.5 in 1960 to 21.2 in 1967. The white rate dropped 30.3 to 29 during the same period.

Because most clinics offer free or relatively cheap health care, a look at income differences for white and black workers tend to bolster the view that more working men need additional medical attention if they are to be able to adequately meet the burdens of everyday life.

* * *

As of March, 1966, fully 79 per cent of black men and 75 per cent of their women made their living at manual labor or in-service jobs. Only 51 per cent of white men and 35 per cent of their women faced that job situation.

One of the special burdens black men face in caring for their families is that but 12 per cent of those with 1 to 3 years of high school have white collar jobs, against 23 per cent for whites.

Worse, only 13 per cent of black men with high school diplomas can get white collar jobs while 40 per cent of whites with the same education hold these better paying, and generally physically less-taxing jobs.

Unless public agencies and private industry show more concern for the health needs of the low income black male, we may be inviting a problem that in a few years could place new racial, economic and health care stresses on our society.

Now that you have read this column, what are you planning to do tomorrow to get better health care for black males?

## N. C. Klan chief leaves federal pen

DANBURY, Conn. (UPI) — J. Robert Jones, the grand dragon of the North Carolina Ku Klux Klan, was released last Friday from a federal prison where he served about 10 months of a one year prison term for contempt of coongress.

He said he didn't have any trouble with black inmates at the prison, "only the Jews."

Asked if he planned to resume his position as grand dragon of the Tar Heel Klan, he replied: I already have — inside."

Jones, Robert Shelton, the imperial wizard of the United Klans of America; and South Carolina Grand Dragon Robert Scoggin were all sentenced to one year prison terms last year for refusing to make Klan membership lists and records available to the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1966.

Shelton and Scoggin were released late last year. All three men were freed early because of good behavior.

NEW YORK — In a Lindsay Administration shift last week, Simeon Golar was named chairman of the New York Housing Authority, which runs the nation's largest public housing program. Golar has been chairman of the City Commission on Human Relations. Edwin Greenidge, deputy commissioner of youth services, was named deputy to Albert A. Walsh, the new commissioner of housing and development, whose old job Golar took.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## Africa Happenings

By WILLIE GIVENS

One is the youngest ambassadors in Washington today is from Zambia. He is Mainza Chona, 39, and a prominent figure in his country.

Chona, accompanied by his wife and seven children, arrived in the U.S. recently to continue his distinguished services to his country.

Ambassador Chona attended the Chikuna Training School and later the famous Munali Training Center where he obtained the Cambridge Overseas School certificate.

His civil service career began in Northern Rhodesia, where he won a scholarship to study law at Gray's Inn, London, and later became the first barrister-at-law in Zambia, then Northern Rhodesia.

He entered politics actively in 1959 when he served as interim president of the United National Independence Party, Zambia present ruling party.

* * *

When Dr. Kenneth Kaunda was released from custody by the British, Chona relinquished the presidency in favor of Dr. Kaunda and became vice president.

In 1964, Ambassador Chona was a member of parliament for Livingstone, the tourist capital of Zambia. He is currently an M.P. for Mankoya, a seat he won in the 1968 general election.

Ambassador Chona's cabinet portfolios include minister of justice, 1964; minister of home affairs, 1964-66; minister of presidential affairs, 1965; minister without portfolio, 1967-68; minister for the Central Province, 1969 and minister of provincial and local government, 1969.

President Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast has reorganized his government, bringing into the ranks, nine new ministers under 40 years of age.

Five ministers were dropped and two new government departments were created. One deals with tourism and the other with technical and professional education.

The Ghana government has been under constant attack by some African nations for its move to expel Nigerian, and other foreigners.

Some observers think this action is in line with the new government's plan to get qualified Ghanians into positions held by people from other countries who have little intention of investing their earnings in the country.

But others see the expulsion as a threat to friendly relations among African nations. The current action could have adverse affects on thousands of Ghanaians who live in other West African nations. This also deprives the individual of the right to live where he can find life more satisfying.

Since the order was handed down last month, some cans including 20,000 of the 250,000 Nigerians, have left Ghana.

More than 8,000 aliens have applied for residence permits to escape expulsion under a recent order requiring such permits. The order applied mostly to Nigerian, Malian and Ivory Coast nationals.

The Ghanaian action was also taken in the light of current crimes, many of which are committed by aliens.


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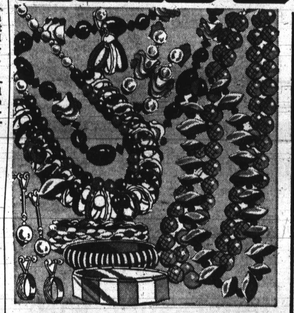

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