



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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**For Immediate Release**

# **National Medical Association Mourns the Death of Iconic Leader, Nelson Mandela**

Silver Spring, MD- (December 7, 2013)-The National Medical Association (NMA), the nation's oldest and largest organization representing African American physicians, is deeply saddened by the loss of the legendary world leader, Nelson Mandela or "Madiba" as he was affectionately known to those citizens of South Africa. Nelson Mandela was 95 at the time of his death. Mandela, South Africa's first black president, led his nation's movement to end oppression and apartheid. Upon his release after 27 years in prison by the South African government, Mandela's resounding commitment to forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, and human rights were all staples of his legendary "long walk to freedom." He chose not to crucify his enemies upon his release from prison; instead he embraced them and encouraged others to do the same. As the recipient of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, Mandela became a symbol for peace and unity not only in South Africa, but across the world. He was a leader who made a difference in the lives of millions affected by apartheid, and he focused on teaching individuals all over the world to love one another rather than to hate.

After his retirement, Mandela became a courageous and willing advocate for eradicating HIV/AIDS often defying his own government's denial of the epidemic. In 2000, he gave the closing address at the XII International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa. Afterward, he worked tirelessly to end the stigma and shame for those living with HIV/AIDS and eventually became a strong supporter of increased prevention and treatment for those living with the disease not only in South Africa but around the world.

The members of the NMA, an organization whose mission it is to advocate on behalf of the underserved and the disadvantaged against health disparities, felt a great loss upon the death of Nelson Mandela, who was a wonderful health and human rights leader. "I speak on behalf of our NMA leadership, membership and staff when I say that Nelson Mandela's passing has affected us all, but we must and will draw inspiration from his life's work," said Michael A. LeNoir, M.D., 114<sup>th</sup> president of the National Medical Association. "The contributions of an elegant and remarkable man with a quiet strength, augmented by a vision of world peace, come along only once in a lifetime. Although he is no longer with us physically, his death provides an opportunity for all of us to reflect and celebrate not only his life but his legacy," continued LeNoir.

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Founded in 1895, the National Medical Association (NMA) is the nation's oldest and largest medical association representing the interests of more than 35,000 African American physicians and their patients. The NMA repeatedly advocates for policies that would assure equitable and quality health care for all people.