

October 13, 2017

Dear Mayor de Blasio and the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers,

I am writing on behalf of the Manhattan Central Medical Society (MCMS) and other local affiliates of the National Medical Association to implore you to permanently remove the statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims from its location on 103th Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Manhattan. With the MCMS as lead signatory, we have brought together twelve locally based or local chapters of physician and medical student organizations speaking as over 15,000 representatives of our profession, and in support of the patients and communities we serve.

I commend your efforts to evaluate all of the “symbols of hate” in New York City, and I hope that removal of the Sims statue may be accomplished. As you might have already heard, this statue is a constant reminder, especially to the residents of the East Harlem community where it is located, of the atrocious experiments that were performed on enslaved women for the benefit of obtaining knowledge of surgical techniques in gynecology. As an obstetrician-gynecologist by profession, this is especially distressing to me. I and my colleagues are committed to continued action on its removal.

A public statue for Dr. Sims serves to undermine the community’s trust in health care, and worsen health outcomes. Instead, the African American women (Betsey, Lucy, and Anarcha), whose bodies were brutalized and used under the guise of a benefit to science, should be memorialized and honored for the extreme sacrifices that they made. Rebuilding trust through public gestures is the foundation of a healthy community.

New York City is enriched by the diversity of its many cultures, languages, traditions, histories, and origins. As such, the City of New York owes to its residents sensitivity towards and recognition of what the Sims statue signifies for a large proportion of New York City, namely the brutality of the actions of such a racist gynecologist like Dr. Sims. As happened in post-World War II Germany, history should be remembered and learned from, but doctors, who experimented on people against their will, have no place being memorialized in the public square.

The Manhattan Central Medical Society is a local affiliate of the National Medical Association. This local chapter was chartered in 1935, and is composed of approximately 1000 primarily African American physicians, practicing in New York City and its surrounding boroughs, many of whom are your constituents. The mission of MCMS is to advance the art and science of medicine for people of African descent through education, advocacy, and health policy to promote health and wellness, eliminate health disparities, and sustain physician viability for the physicians in Manhattan, New York. The National Medical Association was founded in 1895 at a time when African American physicians were not allowed to join the American Medical Association, and whose mission is manifest on a national level.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to take immediate steps toward the removal of the J. Marion Sims statue permanently from New York City and its surrounding boroughs, and any such symbol that represents the same for the diverse population of its city. Thank you for your strong consideration of this matter. I am available to answer any further questions that this letter poses.

Sincerely,

Camille A. Clare, MD, MPH, CPE, FACOG

President, Manhattan Central Medical Society,  
[www.nmamcms.org](http://www.nmamcms.org), a local affiliate of the National  
Medical Association, [www.nmanet.org](http://www.nmanet.org)

Region 1 Chair of the National Medical Association

Additional Supporting Organizations:

Arthur T. Risbrook Medical Society

Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU  
Healthcare

Doctors for America - NY

Empire State Medical Association

National Physicians Alliance - NY

NYC Coalition to Dismantle Racism in the Health  
System

NYS AAP Chapter 2

NYS AAP Chapter 3

Physicians for a National Health Program NY  
Metro Chapter

Physicians for Reproductive Health

Progressive Doctors