

## Serpent On The Staff

*H. Wolinsky, T. Brune*

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#File Name: 0874777542324 pages | File size: 41.Mb

**H. Wolinsky, T. Brune : Serpent On The Staff** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Serpent On The Staff:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Book That Takes On The Doctors' LobbyBy A CustomerFor too long, the AMA has been able to offer itself as "dedicated to the health of America," with no dissenting voice to be heard. But with this hard-hitting expose, Wolinsky and Brune show the hollowness of that claim. In meticulously cited chapter after chapter, they build up convincing evidence that the American Medical Association is dedicated foremost to the health and wealth of doctors. With examples of the AMA's tacit support of Big Tobacco in the 1960s and 70s, its unwavering opposition to Medicare in the 1960s, and its massive lobbying operations in Washington, among others, an inescapable conclusion is reached:The AMA can be hazardous to America's health.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Truth is stranger than fictionBy Dr. DaveThis is a critical and often hilarious look at a stodgy organization that I believe has outlived its usefulness, whatever that might have been. From a former head several decades ago who became a consultant for the tobacco industry, to the Wilks suit (aided by the Scientologists?), the book chronicles the many missteps the AMA has made long before the Sunbeam debacle. The current AMA leadership would do well to read this, and see how the outside world views what was once known as "The Doctor's Union."

A critical look at the American Medical Association, the nation's largest doctors' group.

From Library Journal  
Chicago Sun Times reporters Wolinsky and Brune argue that what is good for the American Medical Association (AMA) is not necessarily good for the public or its health. Since the AMA is a doctors' organization, few readers will be surprised by the authors' revelations of conflicts of professional vs. public interests. The authors provide an overview of the AMA, discussing its organization and membership and how it works; its political "wheeling and dealing"; and some of its less altruistic actions regarding alternative (i.e., nonallopathic) medicines, Medicare, and the tobacco and drug industries and its ethical waverings on health issues such as abortion and AIDS. They write that "the AMA is a cheerleader for just enough reform to avoid a major overhaul" of the U.S. healthcare system. Recommended for healthcare and public policy collections. James Swanton, Albert Einstein Coll. of Medicine, New York  
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From Booklist  
Chicago newsmen Wolinsky and Brune document well the major political activities of what they call the "American Doctors Association" in support of its own financial and organizational health. The AMA, they claim, is more interested in doctors' salaries and privileges than in the care of patients. Doctors' ownership or interests in laboratories, diagnostic facilities, pharmacies, and other health-related work have drawn them away from their profession and into business. Battles against other medical groups, such as those for homeopathy and chiropractic, also have been carried on for financial reasons rather than for the improvement of care. Besides presenting their case, Wolinsky and Brune etch good characterizations of the major AMA spokespersons over the years. The product of many interviews, thorough grounding in the literature, and knowledge of important, leaked internal reports, their book is a contribution to both health-care history and the current health-care reform debate. William Beatty "A wake-up call for 'physicians caring for America' who also care about their AMA and its public image." -- William Rial, MD, former AMA president. "An admirably acerbic appraisal of the AMA." -- The Nation  
"The Serpent on the Staff is a valuable starting point for readers who want an unflinching look at the AMA." -- Wall Street Journal.