



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
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NATIONAL HEART AND LUNG INSTITUTE

October 3, 1974

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
University of Minnesota
Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene
School of Public Health
Stadium Gate 27
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Dr. Blackburn:

Thank you for your letter of September 24 concerning the current membership of our National Heart and Lung Advisory Council.

It is true, as you have indicated, that no one currently on the Council can be identified as a bonafide epidemiologist. I know, however, that several members have been involved in one way or another with the conduct of cooperative clinical trials.

I know you are aware of the fact that we do have within our largest categorical division, the Division of Heart and Vascular Diseases, an Epidemiology and Biometry Advisory Committee. That Committee does provide programmatic advice and guidance to our staff with regard to epidemiologic studies, ongoing clinical trials, and clinical trials that should be considered for the future. Other Divisions of the Institute obtain such advice from ad hoc consultants or workshop sessions.

Another factor must be taken into account: increasingly the mechanism of support for clinical trials and large-scale cooperative studies is the contract mechanism. The Advisory Council is not involved in the review and approval of such contract-supported investigations.

By calling your attention to these factors I do not wish, in any way, to deny the relevancy and importance of your observations. We have had from time to time Council members who were epidemiologists or who were strongly oriented toward preventive trials, public health, etc. By law, eleven of the appointed members of the Council are selected as leading medical or scientific authorities skilled in disciplines relating to diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, blood, and to blood resources. That limited number just does not allow for adequate representation from all of the important disciplines. You will note that currently we do not have a pediatrician on our Advisory Council. Also, despite the fact that we have a very large and significant investment in lipid metabolism and biochemistry, none of our Council could be classified as an expert in this important area.

We do have an opportunity to suggest individuals for membership on our Advisory Council. I would be very pleased to receive specific suggestions for outstanding, statesmanlike individuals in the disciplines you have mentioned so that this important matter can be brought to our attention at the appropriate time in the months ahead.

Thanks again for your thoughtful letter and suggestions.

Sincerely yours,



Robert L. Ringler, Ph.D.
Acting Director