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NRC corresp

Palmer

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Sushma Palmer  
Director Food & Nutrition Board  
National Research Council  
National Academy of Science  
2101 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Colleague:

I have perused your April 30th memorandum with the distressing news that the institute is being forced into a workshop on Diet and Health to meet others' agenda. I think Arno Motulsky's reply was very strong and straightforward. Apparently, things are proceeding anyway. I don't understand why NRC staff and committee heads have to be brow beaten by institute directors with axes to grind. Even more serious, it seems to be that the meeting and its reports upstaging rather than introducing our report is a diversion of energies of members of the committee and staff to the organization of such a meeting as soon as December. We will be lucky to have a strong report which we can begin to formulate recommendations for the Fall meeting. To prepare a good meeting for December will be a serious diversion of energies.

With all of these negative thoughts that we have shared, nevertheless I find the workshop of interest to extend the thinking and participation in our April 6th workshop. I think we have discovered the key participants that could be effective in another such presentation and these, of course, would include Mark Hegsted, Richard Peto, John Bailar, and a few others. As I have voiced to you, I feel the real need at this stage to get a strong person in the field of cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis and evaluation into the picture for our deliberations. Such a person could be useful in a workshop, along with a few more representatives from industry. I will certainly not favor a book as the outcome, but presumably a short report which could be editorialized in Science or elsewhere. Some of the criteria that I have outlined and some of the excellent thinking of John Bailar on this issue would be helpful in preparing Session 2. Peto would be excellent for Session 1.

Cordially,

*Henry Blackburn (HKB)*

Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

/lk

cc: Chris Howson

HEALTH SCIENCES