

August 20, 1976

Honorable Walter F. Mondale
Senator from Minnesota
443 Old Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

pc L. Stauffer

Dear Senator Mondale:

I wonder if you and your staff would like to consider the hypothesis that the Executive and Legislative branch are insufficiently advised on major scientific and medical matters. It is difficult to eliminate adversary approaches and self-interested recommendations from key advisory positions, but narrow professional interests, attitudes, and concepts of scientific spokesmen could be obviated by selection of people who have made a career of involvement with the larger social and public health issues.

It would seem to me that a Presidential Advisor for Science should have the widest view of the social responsibility of, and impact of science rather than smaller though important views about the significance of fundamental and unfettered scientific research. It would seem to me that the health advisors to the Executive and Legislative branches might best be chosen from those who are concerned with the Public Health rather than solely with basic scientific research or such clinical-medical disciplines as surgery.

Are we not in the position of having the equivalent of a Minister of Health having no scientific or medical experience whatsoever, and an Assistant Secretary for Health deriving from a clinical and experimental pharmacological background. We are in fact, in the position of having no major public health figure on the Advisory Councils of the two largest Institutes, the Cancer and Heart Institutes.

Under these circumstances there is little wonder that a narrow and expensive technological approach to medical and scientific matters continues largely unabated, no environmental impact is considered of technological developments largely concerned with curative and palliative care of a small fraction of the population. These technological approaches completely overbalance public health and social needs.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.

HB:jp

*Replied +
sent*