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The Honorable Paul Wellstone
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

P. EL

Dear Senator Wellstone:

The short list for the position of Surgeon General apparently contains the name of Dr. John Farquhar of Stanford. I have known and worked with Jack Farquhar since our residency days at the Minneapolis VA Hospital forty years ago. He is one of the outstanding world leaders in prevention of chronic diseases and in promotion of active health. His Center on Heart Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at Stanford University is one of top institutions in the world in this area.

Both conceptually and practically, Dr. Farquhar has brought the health message to people in an effective way. His recent leadership of international efforts for health in the Victoria Conference in 1992 and the Barcelona Conference in 1995 have been the more effective amalgamations of academics and public health people and policy makers -- with clear-cut national strategies promulgated toward changing smoking, eating and exercise patterns and lifestyles, in developed and developing nations.

His programs are based on sound theory. He is at the forefront of innovation in community-based programs of prevention. His Spanish language programs for community health promotion have indicated both his concern about minority issues and his effectiveness in addressing them.

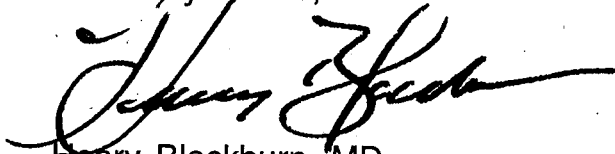
He has a wide grasp of clinical, health care, and public health issues, and I am sure would work effectively in forwarding changes needed in the delivery of health care, with an important emphasis on prevention and health promotion as a cornerstone of a long-term strategy and program.

Personally, he is of the highest integrity, quite personable, charming, and approachable, and he is sound, thoughtful, rigorous, and strong in negotiation.

I know of no skeletons in his closet and I know that he is a strong enough person to function well in the intensity of the political climate for health. Though he has practiced medicine, to my knowledge he has never been involved with reproductive biology in any way, though I suspect he would be strongly pro choice in his policy stance. His directness and people-to-people strategies could conceivably make him another Surgeon General of the caliber of C. Everett Koop, yet starting from a much broader base.

It shouldn't count against him, but he is obviously a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant American citizen of Canadian origin. In my view, however, there couldn't be a finer person to get health promotion as a primary strategy, and to get health services delivery on track.

Sincerely yours,



Henry Blackburn, MD
Mayo Professor of Public Health
and Professor of Medicine

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bpc: G. Farguhar
T. Hasater