

Letter also to: Rep Rogers, Sen. Kennedy, Mondale and Rep Fraser

May 8, 1972

President Richard Nixon
The White House
Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I feel that it is a potentially serious mistake to make politically expedient appointments, especially those influenced by the drug industry, to head government research programs, such as that of the National Cancer Institute.

Medical research must be directed toward the fundamental causes of, and the social and environmental influences on cancer and heart diseases. Such mass diseases have predominant social and cultural "causes," more important even than the actual infections or precipitating agents involved. These factors may not be properly investigated, with the necessary emphasis on prevention, by conventional therapeutic medical approaches which produce essentially stop-gap or palliative measures. We physicians are in danger of becoming another cultist group of pill-pushers or gadgeteers.

I hope you will be able to make sure that your campaign against cancer is as much concerned with the socio-cultural influences as with the search for specific agents and temporary cures.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
Professor

HB/rs