

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

*Twin Cities Campus*

Claude Lenfant, MD  
Director, NHLBI

*Division of Epidemiology  
School of Public Health*

*Suite 300  
1300 South Second Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55454-1015  
612-624-1818  
Fax: 612-624-0315*

Dear Dr. Lenfant:

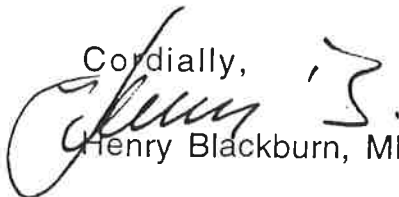
Many thanks for your March 13 letter about the San Francisco meeting. It was a privilege to be a part of it. The excellent program and its participants were testimony to your ideas and leadership.

As to my "...warning [about backsliding]...leading to ... redoubled efforts aimed at education, risk-factor reduction, and health promotion," as you hoped in your letter, much will depend on improved relationships of the epidemiology and preventive cardiology community with DECA and NHLBI leaders and advisors. Some of the concerns I voiced long ago on Council, which disturbed you no little at the time, about increasing central control over and direction of preventive researches, and about staff conflicts of interest between research goals and supportive administration, are finally coming strongly to the fore. You will be hearing soon from some quiet but sage voices on these issues, to include many positive suggestions.

There is so much promising that still needs to be done to reduce the cardiovascular disease burden from known and new risk factors. But we seem to be backsliding in prevention research and policy as well as in preventive practice and health behaviors. A truly open dialogue, leading to new views and initiatives, and a more healthy collaboration between NHLBI and the scientific community, is possible and desirable.

I am sure that you must take great satisfaction in the progress in reducing cardiovascular diseases made under your leadership. And you are clearly in a position to set the policy and tone for future prevention efforts. Perhaps most remarkable to me in San Francisco was to hear such a strong acknowledgement of epidemiological and preventive pursuits from the country's leading clinical investigator, your friend, Gene Braunwald. We musn't lose the initiative that you and NHLBI have provided.

Cordially,

  
Henry Blackburn, MD