



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene  
School of Public Health  
Stadium Gate 27  
611 Beacon Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

*Caren Jacobson*

October 27, 1981

Michael Jacobson, Ph.D.  
Center for Science in the  
Public Interest  
1755 "S" Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Mike:

The mystery of the AHA Big Boy Hamburger chain and other improper use of the AHA logo is to be found in the AHA "Development Committee," those business types in the association that are responsible for money raising. As you may know, there has been a long standing restrictive policy that the American Heart Association would not be involved in any direct or even implied "endorsements." The Scientific Councils and the American Heart as a whole have been rigid about this and generally effective, so that all the large food companies have known where they stood.

The mistakes made were by the development people and are being vigorously called to the attention of the Association leaders, not only by the Councils, and the Nutrition Committee on which I serve, but by the larger food industries that have agreed to avoid advertisement that would imply American Heart endorsement. They feel that they have been badly treated.

I think that the mechanisms for communication are now established and the concerns clear to everyone. I do not think it would be appropriate for you to lambaste the Heart Association as a whole or to accuse it of duplicity in this effort, which was due to a lack of communication between the lay fund raisers of the Association and the policymaking body which is now very much aware and concerned about implied endorsements. If you were to suggest "collusion" between the American Heart Association and Big Boy Hamburger, etc., as a matter of policy you would be mistaken and unfair in your criticism.

Keep up the good work! If you and I are to remain in contact on these issues, which I desire, I will need to be reassured of the fairness of your investigations and criticisms of important organizations in preventive efforts in this country. I am a bit concerned now by your preparations to make the American Heart Association a target and ask you to be careful. It is the leading institution which combines lay and scientific investigators to work on issues of heart disease prevention. It is the oldest to have a council on epidemiology concerned with prevention and public policy. Its journals and its programs have given full play to the information on risk factors and health behavior. Its public policy has made the first strong statement on diet from the very earliest times, and though there are factions

within the organization that would like to move back from that, the latest meeting in Dallas in August departs not a whit from the strong position statement of the American Heart Association.

On the other hand, I think it would be proper for you to point out where mistakes have been made and to suggest inconsistencies. But any wholesale, hostile or unbalanced "expose" of the American Heart Association would permanently cut off a large segment of the scientific community which respects the role of responsible consumer organizations.

I am much less familiar with the American Cancer Society and believe that they and the Cancer Institute don't hold a candle to NHLBI and the American Heart Association in soundness, courage and public health stances. On the other hand, the issue requires a balanced weighting of their strengths and weaknesses, worthwhile efforts and mistakes. I and others will be watching carefully your efforts on these issues. I hope to respond later to your mark of excellence idea. I hope that you have followed my lead to contact Joanne Friedman of Health Marketing Systems of New York on her marketing ideas. That seems to be getting under way.

Cordially,



Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

HB:lr

CONFIDENTIAL bpc to Jerry Stamler: I'm sure you share these sentiments.