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April 8, 1986

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
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Dear Henry:

I apologize for the delay in responding to your March 19th letter, however, I'm only now recovering from an episode of pneumococcal pneumonia that I had two weeks ago.

First, I very much welcome the opportunity to serve on the Executive Faculty of the Division. I'm fully committed to doing what I can to assist the Division in general and to also help make the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program a viable and credible part of the Division's efforts. I sincerely appreciate your consideration of me for the Executive Faculty and hope that I can contribute to it in a meaningful way. Please keep me informed on how I might best participate.

With regard to your second point, I too was surprised to learn of Ed Kaplan's nomination of Dr. Patricia Ferrieri for the American Epidemiological Society. Pat is a pediatrician with a subspecialty in infectious diseases. She runs the Bacteriology Division of the Clinical Laboratories at the University Hospitals. While Pat has done some epidemiologic studies of Group B streptococci in pregnant woman and new born infants, this work was really quite limited in terms of its epidemiologic scope. For the past 5 to 8 years, almost all of her work has been largely laboratory oriented. Obviously by this time, the decision with regard to Dr. Ferrieri's nomination has been made, and although I don't know the outcome, I will be surprised if she is invited to membership based on her "epidemiologic" track record.

Nonetheless, this does raise an important issue and one that I have wanted to discuss with you for several months. In fact, I had intended, prior to receiving your letter, to set up a meeting with you after winter quarter and I had completed my infectious epidemiology course, to discuss the relationship of other infectious disease physicians and non-physician epidemiologists to the graduate faculty in the field of infectious disease epidemiology. I will be making an appointment with you during the next several weeks so that we can further discuss this issue. I look forward to your guidance in this area.

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Finally, I do want to let you know that I will be taking a temporary leave of absence from the Department of Health beginning on May 15 and continuing through late August. I have decided to make an attempt to swim the English Channel this summer and will be devoting my full-time efforts to training for the August 15th swim. During this time I will be available on a very limited basis for any problems and emergencies that might arise. In addition, I do plan on assisting with Ph.D. examinations in June and teaching for one or two days in the epidemiology summer session. I will be happy to discuss my absence during the meeting that I am setting up with you. I'm sure that we will be able to work out a schedule which will allow me to fulfill my duties on the division faculty.

Best Wishes.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike", written in dark ink.

Michael T. Osterholm, Ph.D., M.P.H.
State Epidemiologist and Chief,
Acute Disease Epidemiology Section

MTO:ag