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DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

630 West 168th Street

July 28, 1987

Dr. Henry Blackburn
Professor and Director
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Dear Henry:

I was extremely sorry to hear of your acute illness, that prevented you from attending the CDH meeting in Woods Hole last week. I hope that you are fully recovered and feeling well again. You were very much missed at the meeting.

The CDH meeting was quite productive. The Committee is finally far advanced in developing a detailed report -- which will probably comprise a manuscript of the order of 2000 pages. Some of the chapters are already nearing final draft form; others still need a good deal of further thought and development. The Committee also discussed recommendations at some length at the Woods Hole meeting. I think you will be quite pleased with the emerging plans for conclusions and recommendations, although your presence and discussion would have been most useful.

With regard to the chapter on Dietary Fats and Lipids (Chapter 7), the Committee agrees that this is an extremely important chapter, since it will be the focus of major public health recommendations, and of considerable potential scrutiny and controversy. Hence, it is essential that this chapter be as thorough, complete, scholarly, and effective as possible. The text of the chapter must be able to fully support the conclusions and recommendations in a convincing and authoritative manner.

The Writing Group for Chapter 7 (Drs. Connor, McGill, Miller, Carroll, Schieken, Richard Shekelle, and myself) met for 2 hours on Monday afternoon to review the status and plans for the chapter. We agreed that some modest changes in the chapter outline and organization were needed, in order to more clearly present the evidence and logic connecting dietary fats/lipids with cardiovascular disease (CVD). Enclosed is a copy of the revised outline that we generated and agreed upon.

Let me first review the outline with you, and specifically the sections for which you are responsible. Section II.A.1. will review "Relationships between plasma lipid and lipoprotein (LP) levels, atherosclerosis, and CVD." Section II.A.1.a. ("Epidemiological evidence") is the same as the former section II.A.1.a., which you have written, and which needs revision (see below). Section II.A.1.b. ("Clinical-genetic evidence") is a new section, which should summarize the clinical-pathological correlations (which you have already done in part - i.e., correlations between lipid/LP levels and atherosclerosis in humans) and also briefly comment on the genetic hyperlipidemias - particularly FH - which clearly show that elevated LDL leads to accelerated atherosclerosis and premature CHD. We hope you will prepare the first draft of section II.A.1.b.

Section II.A.2. will review "Effects of dietary fats/lipids on plasma lipid and LP levels and metabolism." Section II.A.2.a. ("Epidemiological evidence") is the same as the former section II.A.1.b., which you have written, and which also needs revision (see below). Finally, section II.A.3. will review "Relationships between dietary fats/fatty acids and CVD." Sections II.A.3.a. ("Dietary variables") and b. ("Epidemiological evidence") are the same as the former sections II.A.2.a. and b., which you have written and which need revision. Section II.A.3.c. will review "Clinical studies and trials" of dietary fats and CVD - Rick Shekelle and Chris Howson have agreed to prepare this section.

Let's now discuss the sections of this chapter for which you have prepared drafts, and are responsible. First of all, I want to say that I appreciate the long and thoughtful letter that you wrote (dated July 10, 1987) commenting on my previous "reviewer's comments". I read your revised drafts carefully and with interest, and am enclosing my handwritten (and fairly extensive) comments and suggestions regarding this text.

I hope, Henry, that you will not take offense at the fact that I am making quite extensive critical comments about your draft text, and that I want to persuade you to undertake a substantial re-shaping and revision. It is not a matter of personal taste and style. Rather, I feel that this is my role as "chapter coordinator" - i.e., to be an aggressive reviewer/editor. I have the very highest regard for your professional achievements and abilities and for most of your past writing. It is for this reason that I feel that I can be frank with you about the present text.

The CDH Chapter 7 Writing Group that met in Woods Hole agreed unanimously that the drafts that you have written for this chapter need considerable revision for the purposes of this specific report. Your drafts seem more written for a textbook chapter, or for the chapter in a monograph (e.g., the excellent chapter you wrote for the recent monograph "Hypercholesterolemia and Atherosclerosis", edited by Steinberg and Olefsky). However, the needs of the CDH report are different. Our chapter should summarize the evidence on a given topic in a thorough, objective, scholarly, and balanced way--- and then come to conclusions--- and even later to recommendations--- after all of the evidence has been reviewed and its strengths and weaknesses assessed. Your

draft text does not seem objective or unbiased. It seems to start with a point of view about public health recommendations and to weave this repeatedly into the text in an exhortatory manner. What we need is for you to provide a thorough and succinct scientific review of the available (published) evidence, for each section that you are writing, in as objective a manner as is possible. The sections should review all of the literature (tables can be used - with reference to other good reviews as well), but should use fewer Tables and Figures than you now propose. I continue to think that the model for what we want in this report (and this chapter) is the kind of review that Henry McGill wrote for dietary sterols. Perhaps you could read his draft before working on further revision of your sections.

Richard Shekelle said that he would be seeing you soon, and that he would review with you the thoughts of the Committee about Chapter 7. He has graciously agreed to work with you as needed to help put sections II.A.1.a./b., II.A.2.a., and II.A.3.a./b. together in the manner that would be desirable for this report. Bill Connor also said that he would be speaking with you soon to be sure that his section II.A.2.b. ("Clinical and Metabolic studies") meshes well with your sections.

Enclosed also is a copy of the Overall Summary (with recommendations) that I wrote for Chapter 7, and that was discussed and generally agreed upon at the Woods Hole meeting. I would appreciate your detailed comments and suggestions about this summary. The text of the Chapter should provide the thorough and detailed review of the studies that support this overall summary and recommendations.

Enclosed also is a xerox copy of a relevant paper that was published recently, from the Tromso Heart Study. I would think that some reference to this paper should be made in Section II.A.2.a.

Please telephone me, Henry, if there are questions or issues that are not clear. This may be particularly useful because we are now under a good deal of time pressure to try to complete the full draft of the Chapter. In fact, there is a considerable sense of urgency for we are supposed to have nearly final drafts of all chapters to Chris Howson before the end of September, so that the Committee can undertake serious chapter reviewing at its meeting in October.

Accordingly, I must have your revised drafts within a month - i.e. by August 25 at the latest. I will have enough time available between then and Labor Day for serious editing. After Labor Day, I have an extremely heavy schedule and will have difficulty in working on the Chapter. Everyone involved in Chapter 7 has agreed to provide revised drafts (as nearly final as possible) to Chris Howson and me by August 25th (or earlier) and we are counting on you to do the same.

Henry, I know how busy you are. However, I do think this report can have a valuable impact on national policy, so that we all want it to be as excellent and effective as it can be. I know that you will be pleased with it when it

is completed. We need your time and effort at this juncture in the project.

All good wishes for a fine summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dewitt".

Dewitt S. Goodman, M.D.
Tilden-Weger-Bieler Professor

Enclosures