



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
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June 10, 1966

Mrs. Mary Lasker
Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation
Chrysler Building
Room 3313
New York, New York

Dear Mrs. Lasker:

I enjoyed your Rubella luncheon but it was a particularly notable occasion for me because it gave me an opportunity to meet you at last. I was much impressed by your perceptive questions and those of Dr. Farber concerning adequacy of support for vaccines in general and Rubella in particular.

Of course there is far too little support to solve the enormous problems envisioned by those who must actually do the research. Drs. Davis' and Overman's answers that the current budgets were adequate were given in a context full of existing limitations. In other words, given the existing facility and personnel ceilings that have been imposed for many years on the intramural programs of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the current virus-vaccine funds appear to represent all that can be effectively supervised. For instance, my intramural research associates must provide scientific supervision for the entire viral vaccine program and carry out their own research work as well. To do this properly, we need twice as much space and twice as many well-trained virologists. Currently most of my associates, including perhaps four of the ten most accomplished and productive virologists in the world, are each supervising the research programs of five or more outside contracts, and at the same time our virus group published 125 papers last year. Drs. Chanock, Rowe, Sever and I must rely (in some cases) on two-year research associate appointees to help us supervise large research programs. This is nuts, but we have no alternative. We can't keep most of our most promising young investigators after we train them because we haven't space for them to pursue their own research interests after their two years' training as associates.

The time is drawing near when vaccines will be sought for various cancers and leukemia. A well-conceived and effectively managed cancer virus vaccine program will depend to a great extent on the professional intra-


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mural staff of the National Institutes of Health and their ability to design and supervise and coordinate the mission-oriented virus research programs required to achieve such vaccines.

We still have too large a gap between scientific discovery and its application to the solution of human problems. The National Institutes of Health represents the national instrument for closing this gap. Considering everything, it has done very well up to now, but it can and must be able to move more effectively on today's research frontiers. This can't be done with yesterday's facilities, last year's concepts and a residual handful of top-flight in-house scientific planners and investigators.

I will be happy to develop these thoughts further if you think it worthwhile. It's not so much that we need more funds (which of course we do). It's lack of knowhow in the government machinery for making maximum use of the funds available.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Huebner, M.D., Chief
Laboratory of Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Allergy and
Infectious Diseases

*PS: We just heard that Sen Hill has just
proposed another \$1 million for the Vaccine appri.!*
J.K.