

*Arthur  
Owens*

July 24, 1964

Dr. Ralph E. Knutti  
Director, National Heart Institute  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda 14, Maryland

Dear Dr. Knutti:

Your letter of July 9 was a delight to receive. For reasons I do not now understand, I had had quite contrary expectations with regard to the position that the Institute might take on the matters concerning the artificial heart that I had raised in my letter, and I really was very pleased to find that you were ahead of me on most of them. Let me then offer my full support to what you are trying to do.

I am not able to undertake very much traveling these days and still keep track of all the loose ends here, so that I do not expect to be in Bethesda in the foreseeable future. However, I would be quite delighted to talk to Dr. Beem or Dr. Hastings, and expect to be on deck for just about any time that they might care to mention. I have been in close touch with Dr. Comroe and we are very much of one mind on the kind of push that is now needed.

I really have only one further remark to make about your letter, and that has to do with the possible role of NASA in these matters. I could hardly speak for the agency's policy, but I do know that the office of life sciences have constantly encouraged us in our own programs where they might have applications of general health significance as well as a direct pertinence to the space program, and have particularly encouraged us to get joint backing from NIH where there could be a mutual interest. So I suspect that at least as far as the operating levels are concerned, the issue may be more the one of waiting for the proper initiative from the NIH in areas where there might be joint interest than any actual lack of concern on the part of the corresponding offices in the space agency. In any case, the technological steps needed to get the systems study off the ground really do not call for any very deep involvement by comparison with NASA's over-all program, and to that extent you might be able to mobilize considerably more help in an area where they do have some force and experience than I would have read into the wording of your remark.

Well, I really should apologize for butting in, since what I have to say comes from a different end of the game than you have to keep in mind in Washington. If we can get together, and with Julius, I would be delighted at the chance. Meanwhile, if there were anything that I could contribute without having to make a trip of it, I would be delighted to assist in any way possible.

Sincerely yours,

Copy to Dr. Comroe

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

KNUTTI