

Separate Agency on Cancer Hit

Special to The Examiner

STANFORD — A Nobel laureate in genetics here has announced his opposition to creation of a separate federal agency to fight cancer.

Dr. Joshua Lederberg of Stanford University Medical Center announced his opposition in a letter yesterday to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare's sub-committee on health, which is conducting hearings on the proposed new agency.

"All health research should be knit together within a single agency, specifically an augmented and strengthened National Institutes of Health," said Lederberg.

Reverses Himself

Lederberg said he had reversed his earlier support for the program, because of what he considered President Nixon's "new public commitment" to health research in general and cancer research in particular.

Lederberg, who believes cancer research's chances are best in the preventive field, urged support of research through existing agencies.

"The country would be better served by reinvigorating the National Institutes of Health as an integral unit than by inventing new streamlined procedures for the benefit of an excised and transplanted authority," he wrote.

Best Chance

Lederberg said the greatest promise for eradication of cancer comes from recent advances in basic biological knowledge such as in DNA, the genetic material in viruses.

Preventive measures can be developed with growing information about environmental effects upon cancer, he noted.

Many forms of cancer will be found to be related to known environmental hazards — chemicals to which people are exposed at work and home, and chemicals used as food additives or drugs, he said.