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August 10, 1971

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LHNCBC

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics
Department of Genetics
Stanford University
School of Medicine
Palo Alto, California 94304

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

The Association of American Medical Colleges, in a report to be published as Part 2 of the July 1971 issue of the Journal of Medical Education, recommended that the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications support a clearinghouse or information center on biomedical computer programs. The activities of such a center could range from collecting information about available programs to collecting, validating, re-formatting, copying and distributing actual programs, as NASA's COSMIC center at the University of Georgia does for scientific and engineering programs.

The Advanced Research Projects Agency has shown the feasibility of linking dissimilar computers together with high speed communication channels and making it possible to exchange programs and manipulate data bases among the computers in the network.

The Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications has been given rather broad responsibilities in the areas of biomedical communication systems and networks. Either or both of these projects--the information center or the network--could be interpreted as being within our intellectual, if not financial, scope. Both seem technically feasible. But before we can proceed with our planning we need help from potential users and members. Would you, or your computer center, be interested in:

- (a) Participating in a clearinghouse/information center on biomedical computer programs, possibly even to the extent of running it?
- (b) Becoming part of an ARPA-type biomedical computer network?
- (c) If (b), are any of your present or planned computers capable of operating in the time-sharing mode?

I'm sending these letters primarily to principal investigators on BRB active computer grants. If you're interested, I'll be glad to send you a summary of the answers I get, keeping the correspondents anonymous.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold Wooster".

Harold Wooster, Ph.D.

Chief, Research & Development, LHNCBC