

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98105

March 18, 1968

School of Medicine
Department of Medicine
DIVISION OF MEDICAL GENETICS

AIRMAIL

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

Dear Josh,

Since I spoke to you in early February about the "social issues" committee of the A.S.H.G., you have been in touch with Margery Shaw about the program of the Society. Both she and myself had very similar, quite independent ideas about a symposium. I have seen all correspondence and am delighted to hear that you will organize this symposium for the forthcoming meeting in October. The officers of the Society, including Margery Shaw, had a meeting in Houston in mid-February regarding these and other matters which I was supposed to attend. Unfortunately, I developed a bad case of influenza and was out of commission for more than a week. However, we discussed some of the problems over the phone in a conference call.

I would like to meet with you and other members of our committee sometime during the next month or two to discuss specifically what the American Society of Human Genetics should do or not do to assume more responsibility in matters of human genetics affecting society at large. I have drawn up the enclosed list of problems of genetic significance. Such a list might serve as a tentative broad agenda for the first meeting. I would foresee that in some cases, subcommittees would need to be appointed who could deal with a given matter. We need to discuss and decide whether it is appropriate to set up a scheme by which various official bodies (from senate committees down through city health departments) could obtain competent advice and information regarding human genetics. Although heterogeneous in composition, the American Society of Human Genetics is the single body which in its membership represents the most expert knowledge regarding these various matters and their possible impact on man. Other societies such as the American Public Health Association and the Planned Parenthood Federation have been setting up committees dealing with some of these issues and are now turning to our Society for guidance. The main concern at this point will be to avoid to be pushed into action in areas where our knowledge is uncertain. The phenylketonuria debacle is a good object lesson. You will recall that our committee should bring recommendations to the Society. These might be integrated in some manner with your program in October.

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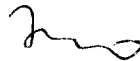
A meeting in Palo Alto is satisfactory with the Society and myself. Could you ask Jim Crow and Mike Lerner whether they would be willing to serve on this committee? They would be extremely useful. John Graham is on the committee so far, and Irene Uchida will attend ex officio as the President of the Society this year. I had asked Curt Stern in Carmel, but he begged off after a short conversation pleading overload. Possibly you might convince him to change his mind. He would be of great value and would not have to go far for the meeting. I definitely will ask Jim Neel, Barton Childs, and Alec Bearn to serve. My first choice of dates for the meeting would be Saturday, April 13; my second and alternate choices: Saturdays, May 11, 18, or 25.

Could you phone me 206-543-3593 (office) or 206-364-4115 (home) soon after you receive this letter to discuss further details? I will hold up communicating with any of the other people till I hear from you.

Both Gretel and I enjoyed very much our visit with you last month and want to thank you for your hospitality. We regretted that there was not more time.

Looking forward hearing from you.

Best personal regards,



Arno G. Motulsky, M.D.
Professor of Medicine and Genetics

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P.S. Read about your recent testimony before the Mondale committee.