

August 10, 1965

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President,

Yesterday on our way out to NIH in the helicopter, you asked those accompanying you for recommendations of the individual to replace Dr. Luther Terry as Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, whose resignation you were going to announce in the course of your remarks at the National Institutes of Health. My hesitancy in not immediately naming an individual in response to your request was by no means due to the fact that I had no firm conviction as to whom this individual should be, but rather was a result of uncertainty as to the inclination of the individual I had in mind in respect to such a position. However, in the context of your stirring remarks concerning your hopes and desires for new and bold objectives for advancing the health and well being of the people of this Nation and the world, and coupled with your specification of the dimensions of imagination, vision and force of the individual to lead the Public Health Service, I am convinced that the man that I have in mind is the only person supremely qualified to undertake this great and noble task and that he must be persuaded to do so.

You well know the depth of my interest and the extent of my efforts to advance the health of this Nation through the programs of the Public Health Service, and particularly those of the National Institutes of Health. In the 19 years that I have served as a member and then as chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor-HEW Appropriations, I have seen and listened to all Surgeons General of the Public Health Service since Surgeon General Parran, and all the senior officers and program directors of the Public Health Service. In the course of receiving testimony from public witnesses I have had an

unusual opportunity to meet and gain the measure of the leading physicians, medical investigators, and scientists in the country. Throughout these years of effort the one individual who has reflected towering capability, commanding force and magnificent breadth of vision beyond all others is Dr. James A. Shannon, the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

I believe Dr. Shannon possesses the imagination, the sense of the future, the feel for advancing the quality of life that must imbue a Surgeon General who is to lead the vanguard of this Nation's health effort. He has demonstrated extraordinary administrative skill, capability and courage in the way he has employed to the fullest the resources, framework and capability of Federal organization and personnel in building a great scientific institution.

He commands the respect of the Legislative Branch of Government by virtue of his searching views, his candor and the competence with which he has initiated and administered new programs and the prudence with which he has expended large sums of Federal funds.

In addition to his stature as an outstanding public servant, Dr. Shannon has, in the course of the discharge of these responsibilities, continued to enhance a scientific reputation that was already substantial at the beginning of his Federal career. He commands the full respect of the entire scientific community, not only in the medical sciences but across the full range of national scientific endeavor. A crowning accolade in this recognition was his recent acceptance into membership in the National Academy of Sciences, one of the very few Federal scientists so honored.

Dr. Shannon's stature, reputation and achievements are by no means confined to the United States. He is known throughout the world and his advice and counsel in matters relating to health, to the pursuit of the medical sciences, to the international organization of science, has been sought by officials in many other nations and international organizations concerned with health and science affairs. Of great importance to all of us who well know the burdens and frustrations of public action, he is an individual who has brought inspiring leadership to all the people, professional and lay, who have worked with him and for him in the prosecution of

August 10, 1965

the great programs of the National Institutes of Health. He has managed in the midst of the most adverse circumstances to maintain a scientific organization whose stature, achievements and excellence make it a jewel amongst Federal research establishments. You had the privilege yesterday of seeing some brief glimpses of the great work of that extraordinary institution.

Surely I have conveyed to you the strong feeling I have of the great qualities and capabilities of Dr. James Shannon and the enormous potential that he will bring to the position of Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service. Dr. Shannon, without question in my mind, is the single man in this Nation capable of achieving the inspiring goals that you are setting for the great society to which this nation aspires. I commend to your consideration for the appointment to the position of Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service Dr. James A. Shannon, Director of the National Institutes of Health, and urge, in the interests of our common commitment to the health and well being of the people of this Nation, your favorable consideration of this recommendation.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely,

John E. Fogarty
Member of Congress