

Wilfert



# The University of Michigan

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

109 SOUTH OBSERVATORY STREET  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109-2029

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

September 13, 1990

Catherine M. Wilfert, M.D.  
Professor of Pediatrics and  
Microbiology  
Duke University Medical Center  
Box 2951  
Durham, NC 27710

Dear Cathy:

I got your thoughtful letter of August 31 quite belatedly (it arrived in my office September 11). Thus, I am concerned that you thought me unresponsive when I saw you Monday at the Institute of Medicine. For that I certainly apologize.

However, on my return from the IOM meeting, it was waiting for me and I have read it with care. I am distressed to know that the report caused you any personal or professional discomfort since there is no one who enjoys my higher regard or confidence.

As you can imagine, the Commission with its 12 members of very diverse backgrounds and interests presents a major challenge in the context of consensus. For instance, I am quite aware of the conflict of interest forms you refer to, since I also have to fill them out. I even went to the trouble to contact Tony Fauci to be sure they were the same for NIH as for FDA, since my involvement has been much more the latter. The initial wording proposed by some of the more agitated commissioners dealt with that issue in a more accusatory fashion, and when David Rogers and I were reassuring, the compromise was to settle for a call for disclosure. It is my feeling that Tony would be wise to make a strong statement of the sort you did in your letter. I do not feel it is necessary for individuals to do so, but both David and I agreed that with the feelings so high on this subject, some form of disclosure would be very helpful in clearing the air.

As to the good work of the ACTU, I have no reason to be concerned other than in the abstract. However, David and others assure me that some of the units are exceptionally tedious and slow in their progress and that that comment was called for.

I hope you will understand that as chairman of the National Commission on AIDS it is my hope that we can serve a steadily

constructive function in moving the response to the epidemic forward. I hope that is what we achieve with compromises like the ones I made in the third report. I would be very distressed if we had the kind of negative effect you postulated, but I feel fairly sure that our willingness to be at least somewhat critical is playing a considerably pacifying role in many important quarters. That is, of course, a judgment call, and to the extent that the report discomfitted someone I held in such high regard as you, I do feel sad.

Now that I know you had taken such time to write to me I must again express my embarrassment at not having received it before I saw you the other day. I look forward to seeing you soon again.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely,

June E. Osborn, M.D.  
Dean

P.S. I have sent your letter to the Commission staff and asked that they be sure it is distributed to all members of the Commission when we meet next week in our next hearings.