



IN REPLYING
ADDRESS THE SURGEON GENERAL
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
AND REFER TO

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

WASHINGTON

PERSONAL

Medical Officer in Charge
U. S. Narcotic Farm,
Lexington, Kentucky.

Dear Dr. Kolb:

Your letter of July 25, 1935, enclosing therewith a memorandum dealing with the "proposed plan for research in drug addiction" has been received and read with interest. This matter had already been the subject of discussion and correspondence with the group making special studies at the United States Penitentiary Annex, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, before opening the Lexington Narcotic Farm.

I am somewhat afraid of a policy or principle of calling for volunteers for experimental purposes among the prison group. Such a policy is fraught with potentialities for good and also for criticism of the Service. It is my belief, and that of others, that prisoners are never in a position to make a free-will choice in the matter of volunteering for experimental work. Their personal situation is of such a character that suggestions on the part of officers in charge serve to coerce them.

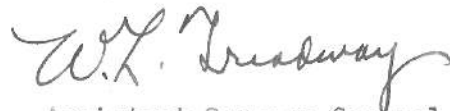
Furthermore, the type of person whom you propose to ask as a volunteer would be of such a constitutional character that if untoward situations developed or arose, he might be placed in a position of aggrandizement and criticism, and would leave no stone unturned until he brought discredit in the public eye upon those who undertook to make him an addict when he had been off the drug for a period of a year. I can also imagine that some well-meaning but misguided person outside the institution might take it upon himself to champion the rights of those "poor downtrodden addicts." From the standpoint of expediency, I believe you would make a serious mistake if you call for volunteers in this matter.

In the Act that established the Narcotic Farms, the Service is directly charged with conducting studies of the nature of drug addiction and the best methods of treatment and rehabilitation of persons addicted to habit-forming drugs. It is probable, therefore, in the course of classifying and grouping your clinical material at Lexington, that you will find a group of individuals who might be selected for studies such as you have outlined, with the idea that such studies would be predicated upon the determination of those functions outlined above.

It would not be necessary for such persons to know from first-hand knowledge the exact nature of the studies contemplated or to be carried on. The selection of individuals for such observations should be done with great care and with the understanding of the potential harm which might arise and the criticism which might develop. Naturally, the period of detention for those selected should be sufficiently long to warrant undertaking rehabilitation measures regardless of the hopelessness of the individual situation.

I should, therefore, conduct these studies from the standpoint of selecting material best suited to accomplish the aims and ends for which the institution is established, but I think you would make a mistake if you call for volunteers.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W.L. Broadway".

Assistant Surgeon General,
Division of Mental Hygiene.

WLT/GM