

The National Office On Disability

1575 I St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 638-6011

January 29, 1982

Honorable C. Everett Koop
Surgeon General
Dept. of Health & Human Services
HHH Bldg., Room 716-G
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Koop:

Thank you so much for being with us today at our meeting to plan the follow through to the International Year of Disabled Persons. We all appreciate your bringing a new perspective to the problems on which we have been working. Moreover, you helped identify a specific approach for our Community Partnership Program in the important area of prevention of disability. I am writing now to follow-up with a suggested plan for cooperating to make this happen.

The National Year of Disabled Persons is just about to pass in the House of Representatives, and it already has in the U.S. Senate by unanimous vote on December 16. The President soon will issue a proclamation. A great opportunity for moving our nation forward in the area of disability, in our view, lies in the area of prevention. It is regrettable, as you and I have discussed, that the IYDP never provided focus for prevention of disabling conditions. Its focus was primarily "full participation". As useful as this concept was, the opportunity for effecting major savings and for preventing agonizing disability for millions of Americans was missed.

The NYDP can help enhance major prevention initiatives. Obviously, your programs and activities are serious, substantive efforts. At the same time, they depend on information. If we move quickly, I believe we can help the President orient the forthcoming proclamation for the NYDP to include prevention. We then can proceed on a broad front.

As we discussed, if we could identify, say, a half dozen disabling conditions amenable to promotion of prevention, we could highlight them as a special prevention agenda for the NYDP. We could develop a targeted information strategy program using our networks, including our 1,850 Community Partnership Committees and 330 national organizations. We could place emphasis on savings to society as a whole, as well as on humanitarian concerns. A National Year of Disabled Persons presents a unique opportunity to launch such an effort. The fact that it is a non-funded program gives it special appeal.

The example you cited of 600,000 elderly people a year who break their hips unnecessarily is an excellent example. The problem is not finding a medical solution; it is getting people to follow simple procedures

Follow Through in '82: The National Year of Disabled Persons

through a public information program. I am sure several such opportunities can be identified.

I write now, Dr. Koop, to request your general approval so that we might work out a cooperative arrangement. I shall give you a call so that we can "hit the ground running". We can immediately develop a plan of action and move ahead to ensure a significant initiative in the important area of prevention during the NYDP with payoff for years to come.

Thank you again for your very thoughtful and encouraging remarks at our luncheon at IBM today.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

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

Alan A. Reich
President

Enclosures