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July 7, 1986

C. Everett Koop, M.D.
Surgeon General
United States Public Health Service
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 716G
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. Koop

On behalf of the American Hospital Association, I want to thank you for inviting us to share with you our perspectives on the public's need for information about the AIDS situation. I hope your June 11 meeting with my staff and our hospital representatives was helpful to you as you gather information for your report to the public on AIDS.

AHA is certainly appreciative of the Department of Health and Human Services' determined effort to combat the disease, by providing accurate and timely information to health professionals and the public about its dangers and the means of prevention. The basic and clinical research efforts at the National Institutes of Health and the epidemiological work of the Centers for Disease Control are evidence of this continuing commitment.

Nevertheless we believe there are still gaps in public knowledge: physicians, nurses and hospital administrators need to have scientific and epidemiological data translated into their practical consequences for patient care; the general public varies in educational background and level of scientific awareness, and needs information tailored to its circumstances. Rural communities face problems different from those of the cities, where AIDS may be more prevalent but where medical and social resources are also more readily available. Your report, bearing the authority of the Surgeon General, will be an excellent means of reaching these communities.

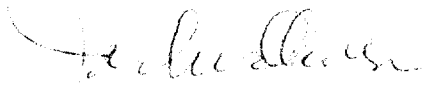
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Bill Johnson, one of the hospital administrators who met with you, is chief executive officer of the University of New Mexico Hospital and chairman of AHA's task force on AIDS. He is sending you a report on the level of public awareness in New Mexico which definitely demonstrates the need for more public education targeted to rural America.

Hospitals' ability to provide care to all who need it is enhanced by public knowledge about real health risks and necessary and effective precautions; conversely, this ability can be seriously impaired by unwarranted public fear. Your efforts to allay these fears by disseminating good information have our fullest support.

If we can be of further assistance, do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely yours



Jack W. Owen
Executive Vice President

cc: Robert E. Windom, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health
Walter R. Dowdle, Ph.D., Public Health Service AIDS Coordinator