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August 30, 1996

VADM C. Everett Koop, USPHS, Ret
Former Surgeon General
United States Public Health Service

Dear Chick:

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you and wish you a happy 80th birthday. It seems like yesterday and yet it seems like ages ago that we first met during the trying time when you were preparing for the Senate confirmation hearings as Surgeon General. I remember our first meeting when I, with a great deal of humility and honor, assumed the role as your personal physician. From that role our relationship evolved to the point where I valued you among my dearest and most treasured friends. Your tenure as Surgeon General was truly historic. Your contributions to the health of the Nation and the courageous manner in which you pursued this goal from the war on smoking through the AIDS epidemic with many projects in between stands as a testimony to the enormous impact that you have had on this Nation. As you well remember, I have given the introductory remarks at several ceremonies at which you received major awards. I repeated over and over again one statement that I developed in the preparation of many of these talks, and I will say it here because it fits you most appropriately. When people heard that I was a close friend of yours, they often asked me what it was like to know you and how impressed they were that you were a very unpredictable individual. I responded very confidently that, in fact contrary to their impressions, you were one of the most predictable individuals that I had ever met. All one had to do was be insightful enough to figure out what the correct approach would be under unusually trying circumstances. Once you have that figured out, then Chick Koop is the most predictable person in the world because he always seems to do what is the most correct, honorable, and appropriate thing for the health of the Nation. This is your legacy and it is something for which you should be truly proud.

It has been a great honor and a pleasure to know you over these past 15 years. I look forward to many more birthday celebrations with you. My wife, Christine, and I wish you and Betty continued happiness and health. Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony".

Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.
Director
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases