

57

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

December 29, 1981

Dr. Louise Schnauffer  
Dr. Josephine Templeton  
The Child. Hosp. of Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

Dear Drs. Schnauffer & Templeton:


Thank you for your letter concerning the proposed nomination of Dr. C. Everett Koop as Surgeon General of the Public Health Service.

My concerns about his nomination as Surgeon General and, ultimately, my opposition to his confirmation focussed on two areas. First, Dr. Koop has little formal public health experience. His outstanding skills as a pediatric surgeon treating individual patients are not very relevant to the role of Surgeon General -- understanding the public health needs of the population as a whole. In other years, when Federal financial support of State and local public health activities was substantial, such a lack of experience might have been less important. But today, with Federal support drastically reduced, when public health professionals across the country are being asked to do more with less money, we need a strong advocate of public health at the Federal level. Dr. Koop's extensive experience in clinical medicine does not prepare him for that role.

More importantly, Dr. Koop does not respect or understand the role of women in today's society. He speaks of women solely as wives and mothers and ignores the fact that half the women with children under eighteen work, many because they are the sole support of their families. In statement after statement, he belittles women's efforts to achieve equality with men. While many women might want a physician with Dr. Koop's surgical skills to attend to their babies, they would have no confidence in a public health spokesman who is on record as strongly disapproving of the lives they have chosen or must live.

Dr. Koop is now the Surgeon General, and I wish him every success. Again, thank you for taking the time to let me know your views on this topic of great concern.

Sincerely,

  
Edward M. Kennedy  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Labor  
and Human Resources