

CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROGRAM, INC .

284 Main Street, P.O. Box 30
Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230

Perinatal Services
WIC Nutrition Program
Well-Child Care
Sick-Child Care
Playgroups
Early Intervention Program

(413) 528-9311
(413) 637-2578

February 17, 1983

C. Everett Koop, M.D.
Surgeon General of the Public Health Service
Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Sir:

On behalf of the Children's Health Program, I am respectfully declining to participate in your new program, "Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies" project. While the goal of our program is certainly to foster the growth of both mothers and their babies through a variety of activities, we are concerned for several reasons about your poster campaign.

Primarily the posters, while colorful and artistically conceived, bear little resemblance to the day-to-day lives of our families so that the message gets lost in the fantasy. But an even worse outcome of the poster is making mothers feel inadequate and unable to meet someone's idealized version of what they should be.

Secondly in examining the foods displayed in the antique carriage, there is an even crueler message; the foods represented there are gourmet items; they are not foods affordable for most of our families. Again, the message that would be conveyed to these families is unless I can give my family these items, I cannot be a successful parent. Given the economic situation of so many families today, this is an insult.

I trust that we will not be alone in bringing these observations to your attention. We remain committed to your goals and would be happy to share with you some of the nutritional graphics developed in our nutrition education programs. But we cannot subject our participants to any messages which imply that their often valient efforts to provide food and shelter to their families are not respected and honored.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Whitfield, M.D.
Executive Director

TJW/ksa

Serving Children, 0-5 Years, in the Towns of
Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Monterey,

TRACER 48697