



P

September 23, 1981

NOTE TO: Tom Donnelly  
Dr. Brandt  
Dr. Koop ✓  
Linda Jenckes  
Carl Anderson  
Laura Genero  
Bill Gribbin

We have prepared the attached materials at the request of Labor and Human Resources staff. I thought you might appreciate a copy.

*Tom*

Thomas M. Antone  
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Legislation (Health)

Attachment

*Packet for  
HHS to Conf. Com.*

NOMINATION OF C. EVERETT KOOP, M.D.  
TO BE  
SURGEON GENERAL

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NOMINATION OF C. EVERETT KOOP, M.D.  
TO BE SURGEON GENERAL  
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The President has nominated C. Everett Koop, M.D., to be Surgeon General, the highest ranking commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service Corps. Confirmation hearings before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee are expected in the very near future. A detailed curriculum vitae and publications listing is attached.

The Surgeon General reports to the Assistant Secretary for Health, the senior health official in the Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General is assigned a number of duties by the Assistant Secretary for Health, and in addition, the Surgeon General has several functions specified in law. A listing of responsibilities and duties also is attached.

Dr. Koop's accomplishments in pediatric surgery are internationally known. Indeed, he was among the first physicians to enter the subspecialty of pediatric surgery and has practiced in that area longer than any other physician. However, he also has made his talents available to further public health outside of the operating room on a much broader scale, often on a volunteer basis. These interests have involved him in public health issues at that critical level where needs are identified and services are actually delivered to needy people. This aspect of Dr. Koop's past will be further developed at the confirmation hearings, but warrants separate mention here.

An important aspect of public health is arranging health services for large numbers of people. Services many range from education to actual care, and population size may vary. The common denominator is that public health rests on identifying the needs of a population and ensuring the availability of necessary services. Clearly a clinical background is useful in such an undertaking. But clinical skills alone are not sufficient. The Surgeon General must also have a command of large scale needs assessment, organization, logistics, and the ability to utilize specialized personnel such as epidemiologists, biostatisticians, health service administrators, and planners.

Public health has been defined as "the effort organized by society to protect, promote, and restore the people's health. The programs services, and institutions involved emphasize the prevention of disease and the health needs of the population as a whole." the following are brief examples of Dr. Koop's experience in the protection, promotion, and restoration of health. They attest to

an extensive background in both clinical and public health services delivery -- a lifetime of health experience and caring for and about people which well qualifies him for the position of Surgeon General.

PUBLIC HEALTH AS PROTECTION FROM DISEASE

- o During World War II, Dr. Koop was the surgical consultant to an epidemiology team lead by Joseph Stokes, M.D., who was assigned the task of investigating the incidence of hepatitis during the allied invasion of Italy. In the course of his work, he described the first transmission of the hepatitis virus across the placenta to affect the fetus without presenting any signs of the disease process in the mother.
- o When Dr. Koop entered the field of pediatric surgery more than 35 years ago, pediatricians were hesitant to consider solid cancers as a major problem in pediatrics although leukemia was recognized as a killer. One of Dr. Koop's first endeavors on arriving at the Children's hospital in Philadelphia in 1946 was to investigate cancer deaths among children recorded in the hospital's records. Dr. Koop identified a major public health problem among children and helped educate his colleagues and the public through his innovative therapies and the establishment of tumor registries. Childhood cancer is now the focus of a large body of research, supported in part by the National Institutes of Health.
- o Utilizing resources such as demographic reports, Dr. Koop studied the health facility needs of Philadelphia and surrounding areas in terms of the age and sex of the population and their effect on health planning for future needs. Dr. Koop was in the forefront of the planning group that built the present Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, one of the most comprehensive tertiary care models in the world.
- o While working with a committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Koop brought attention to the dangers of x-raying the feet of children to see whether or not their shoes fit properly. The result of this endeavor was to have the machines calibrated in some states and to eventually have the practice discontinued due to its inherent dangers. This is an example of a public health hazard being identified and corrected.
- o In the area of cost effective health care delivery modifications, Dr. Koop worked with several colleagues to encourage New Jersey and Pennsylvania to provide care for

respirator dependent children in their homes at a cost of about 1/10 of hospital costs. Just as importantly, this method improved the quality of the care for the children.

- o In 1965, Dr. Koop brought together the State Department's Refugee and Migration Office and private citizens in the U.S. midwest for the purpose of planning and building a 180-bed hospital to serve a particular segment of underserved citizens in the Crown Colony of Hong Kong.
- o While Dr. Koop was a member of the Accident Prevention Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, he was particularly concerned with burns of the mouth and esophagus which increased when corrosive cleaners were colored green and scented with wintergreen, thus encouraging children to regard them as candy. The work of this committee in protecting the consumer was so effective that the court ordered the removal of the scent.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH AS HEALTH PROMOTION

- o For more than 25 years, Dr. Koop has maintained a strong humanitarian interest in the Tarascan tribe of Indians in Central Mexico. There was essentially no medical care for these people until Dr. Koop established several small clinics. He emphasized preventive health services through the provision of protein supplements and vitamins and, on occasion, family planning advice.
- o Dr. Koop became aware of the enormity of problems involving public health and poverty when delivering babies at homes in Harlem in 1941. In addition, from the time he began work with the Children's Hospital in 1946, he has been involved with the provision of care to medically underserved populations and the almost daily interaction between the public and private sector in assuring access to care.
- o In 1960, Dr. Koop, under the aegis of the State Department, traveled to Ghana and concluded an agreement for the establishment of an American-type medical school. In addition, he brought about an arrangement with the Philadelphia College of Physicians through which a faculty was recruited for the school in Ghana.
- o Because of his concern for the health status of people in lesser developed countries, Dr Koop sought and obtained funds from Readers Digest for a program managed by MAP International Inc. This program has been instrumental in

sending over 750 medical students to medically underserved nations so that they might become acquainted with the rigors of practicing rural medicine in primitive circumstances. It is important to note that over 9% of these students have changed their career goals to public health medicine.

- o A focal point of Dr. Koop's career for the past 36 years has been caring for disabled children. This interest goes far beyond pure medical care to include rehabilitation, counseling, and planning for appropriate care facilities for these children, many of whom are disabled for life. Dr. Koop's teachings and writings on the dying child and his/her family are classics in the field.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH AS THE RESTORATION OF HEALTH

- o At the request of the Public Health Department of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Koop conducted an assessment of the needs stemming from a diarrhea epidemic during which the infant mortality rate reached 50-70%. He planned and established nine hydration stations for administering intravenous fluids, procured physicians and nurses for the stations, and arranged for the necessary supplies. The epidemic was stopped as a direct result of Dr. Koop's administrative and clinical skills.
- o One of Dr. Koop's most important public health contributions is his effort in the reduction of infant mortality, a serious public health problem in this country. He has been at the forefront of developing and refining medical care techniques such as pediatric anesthesiology and innovative surgery which have reduced the mortality of newborns, particularly those with congenital defects. Many of those defects resulted in mortality rates as high as 95%. Today it is the survival rate that is 95% in many newborn anomalies. Further, Dr. Koop's establishment of the first newborn intensive care unit in the U.S. has been instrumental in further reducing infant mortality rates. Dr. Koop also contributed to the surgical additions to the standard incubator for premature infants so that much more complex procedures can be accommodated in this environment.

This is but a sample of Dr. Koop's hands-on experience with public health matters; these and other projects will be developed further during the confirmation hearings. As brief as this sample is, it attests to a lifetime of clinical skills coupled with the ability and drive to ensure that the care his individual patients received is available to the population at large. Dr. Koop, with this vision of public health, deserves Congress' recognition and confirmation.