November 15, 1955

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Dear Dr. De Bakey:

Many thanks for your kind letter of November 7. Our meeting, which was quite well attended, went off very well. Amongst those present were Dr. Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr. Bruno Gebhard of the Cleveland Health Museum, Mr. Metcalf, Librarian Emeritus of Harvard, Dr. Maxwell and Dr. Kenard of the AMA, Dr. Willard Cassalier of the American Dental Association, Dr. Williams of the American Public Health Association, and John Kelly and Ken Williamson of the American Hospital Association. Our discussion lasted some two and a half hours and was both informative and, for the most part, quite enthusiastic.

The general consensus of opinion seemed to be that, while, of course, if the Senators do push for legislation to create a national library and museum it might militate against the almost assured construction of a new building to house the Armed Services Medical Library, nonetheless the risk should be taken. The suggestion was made that perhaps the matter could be so handled that the Armed Forces would proceed with their attempts to secure funds for the construction of such a building in Bethesda while the separate legislation was being processed, and that the new legislation could contain a provision calling for the transfer of said structure to the new institution at whatever stage of development it might be when the legislation passed. The majority of those present also seemed to agree that it would be desirable to combine the idea of a national museum of health with that of a national library of health, although it was further agreed that it might be desirable to have them housed in separate buildings -- the library in Bethesda, the museum in downtown Washington. The two representatives of the AMA who were present were not, of course, in a position to speak for the Association with respect to the proposal we put before them. They did point out that the AMA was on record as favoring the construction of a new library by

the Department of Defense. They agreed, however, that this position had been taken without any discussion of the desirability or feasibility of detaching the library from the Department of Defense.

Currently we are marking time awaiting receipt from Dr. Gebhard of some detailed suggestions concerning the proper functions, scope, size, etc. of a national museum of health. When that information reaches us we shall, as I previously explained, attempt to rough draft the proposed legislation. At that time, of course, we shall see to it that you receive a copy inasmuch as we will value your comments most highly. Dr. Gebhard's present commitments are such that I don't expect to receive his material until shortly after December 1, so I will have little to add to this when you arrive in Washington. Nonetheless, I do look forward to seeing you again and hope you will let me know whether the meeting of the National Research Council is such as to leave you some time to spare.

Sincerely yours,

William G. Reidy
Professional Staff Member

WGR:hp