

CITIZENS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, INC.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Mike Gorman, Executive Director

It is with deep regret that I inform you that Citizens for the Treatment of High Blood Pressure will close its offices on or about January 31, 1988.

As Chairman of Citizens since its inception in 1972, Dr. Michael DeBakey has held discussions over the last several months with other founders of Citizens concerning our situation. I append Dr. DeBakey's formal letter to me authorizing dissolution.

On a personal note, I have spent 37 exciting years in Washington in the health field and nothing has been so heart-wrenching in all that time than the inevitable decision we have now been forced to reach.

Citizens was founded subsequent to a meeting which Mary Lasker, Dr. DeBakey and I held with Elliot Richardson, then Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare here in 1972. Secretary Richardson, not a profligate spender, agreed to allocate one million dollars from the Heart Institute budget to inaugurate a national program in hypertension if we Three Musketeers would raise comparable monies in the private sector. We agreed, and Citizens for the Treatment of High Blood Pressure was born.

Space does not permit a chronicle of all of our doings in the succeeding 15 years. Let me highlight just a couple of the most significant ventures. Probably the most important was the extraordinarily difficult task in gaining passage of the 1976 Act authorizing a Federal Project Grant in hypertension to all 50 state health departments. We had no allies in this battle -- all of the major health organizations opposed it, including the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers. That landmark legislation resulted in the appropriation of more than \$120,000,000 to all 50 states to establish state hypertension programs. In turn, state legislators appropriated in excess of \$50,000,000 in support of this objective. Today we take for granted the existence of state hypertension coordinators and state hypertension control programs; none of this would have been possible if the 1976 legislation had not passed.

In the early years of the National High Blood Pressure Program there was a diversity of programs with no central mechanism to define national objectives. As one of the five Charter Members of the floundering private sector effort, we proposed a strong central Coordinating Committee which would be advisory to the National Heart

For The Prevention of Heart Disease, Stroke and Kidney Failure

Institute, would meet regularly and would develop, where necessary, its own initiatives. So was born the National High Blood Pressure Education Program which has been hailed by the Congress and by sundry public health officials as the first successful preventive effort against a chronic disease. Parenthetically, the National High Blood Pressure Coordinating Committee became the model for the establishment in 1985 of the National Cholesterol Coordinating Committee.

Even the most persistent gadflies are sometimes rewarded. At the National Conference on High Blood Pressure Control in Washington in 1983, Citizens received a special award, "In recognition of a decade of outstanding contributions to high blood pressure control... The past is truly prologue for Citizens, because everything the organization has done is a dramatic blueprint for what needs to be done by government, voluntary agencies and the private sector in the future. It was good to have Citizens working with us in this DECADE OF PROGRESS; it is even better to know that they will be with us during THE CHALLENGE AHEAD."

We would like nothing better than to stay the full course, but we believe we have fulfilled our role as a catalyst. When we started out in 1972 we were a lone voice. Today we celebrate the involvement of many organizations far larger than ours in a continuing crusade to bring high blood pressure under control. These organizations are, in a large part, doing a most commendable job in telling the high blood pressure story to the American people. This was our goal from the beginning -- to spark a truly national effort in the private sector. We share with all of you the fact that much has been accomplished and that we can leave the fray with a real sense of satisfaction. Of course, we realize that much work still lies ahead. To cite just one example: You will be constantly searching for mechanisms to increase compliance percentages in both the diet and drug areas. The challenge still goes on.

To all of you who have worked with us and, in many cases, generously supported our programs -- The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, the pharmaceutical industry, and a group of dedicated individuals -- our deepest gratitude and our hope that we have fulfilled your expectations.

Just a word on the State Field Office. In the late 1970's, trying to catch up with the burgeoning state high blood pressure programs through sporadic two and three-day visits, I realized there was a need for a state field office so that I could concentrate most of my efforts on the joyous job of harassing the Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services for more funds for high blood pressure. Over a period of years I canvassed a number of possible private sources without much success, and finally received a budget which pledged five years of support from a single generous donor.

Although the State Field Office has always been a subsidiary organization of the parent Citizens for the Treatment of High Blood Pressure, it may now have the opportunity to create an identity of its own. If so, we wish for it great success.


Finally, a word on cholesterol. We formed Citizens for Public Action on Cholesterol in 1985 to perform the same role as a catalyst that we felt we had achieved in the high blood pressure field. We are gratified that in structuring the National Cholesterol Coordinating Committee the National Heart Institute has closely followed the pattern we established back in the early 1970's. After a number of discussions we came to the obvious conclusion that the cholesterol field is booming along at a terrific rate. Not a day goes by when there isn't a magazine article or television program, or a symposium on cholesterol. In three year's time cholesterol has moved to the forefront of public health programs and we are delighted at the entrance of cholesterol into the big leagues. Those of us who were there in the early days of the high blood pressure movement can only marvel at the media explosion in cholesterol -- in high blood pressure we had a rough seven or eight years before we reached a reasonable degree of public interest.

We are not yet consigned to the nursing home. Dr. DeBakey will carry on his surgical predispositions under my guidance, and I intend to return to my first love -- free-lance writing. I even have a book in pretty fair outline, but, most of all, I will enjoy the freedom of not having to write scores of fund-raising letters each and every year to keep our enterprise going.

I hope our paths will cross many times and, as the Irish say, "May the wind always be at your back."

God Bless, and a very Happy New Year!

Cordially,


Mike Gorman

Enclosure

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