

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE LASKER AWARD LUNCHEON

May 21, 1965

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

L We honor today the best in medical journalism.

L These awards ~~have a meaning far beyond the~~
~~recognition of excellence in medical reporting and~~
~~interpretation.~~ ~~They~~ symbolize the Winged

Victory of man's understanding over ignorance,
man's conscience and the triumph of the healing
arts over pain and death.

L There is special significance in these 16th
Annual Lasker Awards. 1965 is truly a year of health
decision. L It is a year of policy breakthroughs
against the backlog of American health needs. ~~Let's~~

~~Let's~~ L country is poised today to achieve many of the goals
which Lasker Awardees of previous years had envisioned
in their pioneering articles, their broadcasts and

telecasts.

And, The Congress is now in the process of considering
and -- hopefully -- enacting the most comprehensive,
enlightened program of health legislation ever
recommended by an American President.

Conserve Human Resource.
The goal of this program is to protect, to
enhance, to strengthen the most important asset this
nation possesses -- our people. We seek to conserve
our most precious resource -- human lives -- from
the ravages of man's most ancient enemy -- disease.

This deadly foe will, by three diseases alone --
cancer, heart disease and stroke -- kill two out
of every three of us if we do not strike back
now. In material costs, these three disease will
exact an estimated 31 billion-dollar toll this year
alone.

*At the expense of,
Fear,
Poverty.*

To defeat these scourges and many others,
President Johnson has submitted to the Congress a

In the field of Health,

wide range of legislative weapons. ^{his} proposals are designed to make available modernized and increased numbers of medical facilities; to overcome critical shortages of skilled, professional personnel -- as in new Community Mental Health Centers; to provide a sound financial basis for health services for the elderly; to offer expanded service against mental retardation as well as against other forms of disability; to foster loans for comprehensive group practice; and to give added health protection to consumers.

Of the President's many notable recommendations, few will, I believe, be more highly esteemed and rightly so ~~by the present~~ ^{by} future generations than the proposed establishment of multi-purpose Regional Medical Complexes.

These ~~complexes~~ ^{centers}, as urged by the President's

Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer and Stroke,

will assure more -- and more uniform -- excellence

in research, in education and in patient care. / Not

just in a few big cities, but to service every

town and hamlet in every region; ~~centered not~~ ^{not} just

in great Teaching Hospitals but ^{also} in community

hospitals, and geared ~~not~~ ^{also} just for specialists,

but for general practitioners.

/ We laymen know ~~we~~ ^{and} are proud and grateful --

that American medicine, including post-graduate

medical education, has long been pre-eminent in

the world. / But many of our ablest physicians have

reminded us that, in these fast-moving times --

with new information and new techniques proliferating

-- professional knowledge becomes rapidly obsolete.

~~like to be,~~
Professional skills, unless sharpened, rust. The

result can be -- has been -- a serious lag in

putting new medical discoveries to work. ~~That, when~~

~~a patient receives less than the best that medicine
wants to -- and might otherwise -- provide.~~

~~We Americans believe in equality and in quality.
When life or death is at stake, there should be no
second-class patients in our land.~~

American doctors do want to practice the very
best medicine for every patient. Physicians know,
better than anyone that, in medical diagnosis, in
treatment and rehabilitation, too-little, too-
late can spell heartbreak for patients and their
loved ones.

~~Time is of the essence in all war -- no less
so, in the universal war against disease.~~

~~We must not lose a day
or month in conquering disease.~~

In 1964, 1,800,000 Americans died. Of that number, 985,000 Americans were lost to cardiovascular-renal diseases, and 290,000 to cancer.

These deaths are conventionally attributed to what are termed "natural causes" (as distinguished from deaths by man-made violence.)

But man has proven there is little that is really "natural" or "inevitable" about many once fatal diseases. Polio was once considered a "natural" cause of disability; so was rheumatic fever. Influenza and tuberculosis were long viewed as "naturally" heavy killers.

~~Today, we have tamed these and other killers and cripplers. We are determined to wipe them out and lots more disease, too. Not just "some day," but at the earliest possible day. Not just for the well-to-do, but for every income bracket.~~

~~In medicine, as in so many other sciences,~~

~~there is an unbeatable combination -- will and skill.~~

~~We Americans must make up our minds to achieve our~~

~~medical goals, as a people. History confirms what~~

~~A~~ free people can accomplish ^{a great deal when they lift} ~~when it lifts its medical~~
~~their~~ ~~and other sights. Throughout the annals of time,~~

~~most~~ progress has occurred when men and women, once
passive, have risen ^{once} ~~up~~ against what they ~~had~~ considered

~~"their fate" and have chosen to defy the so-called~~

~~"inevitable". At those times, they have declared:~~

This evil condition need not be. ~~So it was when~~

man decided, for example: Slavery need not be.

~~So~~ it was last year when America affirmed: Poverty

need not be. ~~And, now we declare: Most diseases~~

need not be. ~~So-called "incurable" diseases~~

~~can one day be cured, provided we give men of science~~

~~still more of the means -- the money, the personnel,~~

~~the equipment, the facilities, as well as the respect~~

~~and the freedom -- to do their work.~~

✓ The War Against Disease is one war we do want to -- we must -- escalate. ~~We must seek out and attack this enemy in its home base, -- wherever we find it.~~

~~That is why many of the next great advances will come in preventive and diagnostic medicine.~~

✓ The world looks to America for medical leadership. There are few institutions in this vast country which are capable of doing so much additional good for humanity as a great organization in Bethesda, Maryland -- the National Institutes of Health.

✓ When an NIH delegation has gone abroad, no foreign mob has ever hoisted a sign, "Yankee Go Home." ✓ No American flag has ever been torn down because the U. S. shipped Salk or Sabin vaccine to a people fearing a polio epidemic.

✓ Medical research, medical aid do cost money. ~~But death has no price tag -- its cost is beyond estimate.~~

But
This country loses a precious asset every time
prematurely
one of our citizens needlessly dies, America's
most important budget -- its human budget -- has
always been in a certain sense unbalanced. Why?

Because hundreds of thousands of our citizens have

or have suffered
died ahead of their time. *their dignity gone unattended.*
Saving life, prolonging meaningful life -- even

for a month or a year -- is an achievement beyond
comparison.

How much might humanity have benefited if, for
example, medical science could have added one year
of productive life, to say, Albert Einstein or Enrico
Fermi? Who can estimate what mankind has lost from
the untimely deaths of other great scientists -- and
of statesmen, humanitarians, artists? But famous

or unknown, important or ordinary, every human being,
day of life
deserves every ~~year~~ that science can win for him.

We are determined to extend life expectancy --

for every group in our population. To do so, science must learn more about the very process of life, about what goes on at the cellular level in elderly years. In exploring these mysteries, we may find answers of incalculable value to the conquest of specific diseases.

Some day, we will be able to tell the world that science has discovered the secrets of aging or of cancer or of muscular dystrophy, or multiple sclerosis. That news will outrank in importance even the wonderful tidings that man has landed on the moon.

Our people hunger for more news about health.

The American public is eager to learn still more about how to keep well and get well. An informed layman is a crucial ally of medicine -- both on broad issues of public policy and as an individual patient. Professionals recognize that

particular skill and care are necessary in communicating complex medical facts to laymen. But doctors also appreciate the tremendous value of sound medical communication to the public. Outstanding journalism -- such as you honor today -- stimulates the very best in society.

Excellent journalism focuses, informs, arouses, inspires -- for readers, listeners and viewers. Such journalism raises neither false hopes nor false fears.

Great medical journalism is a cornerstone for the good life in the Great Society. It helps make whole -- man's understanding and thereby help make possible -- man's healing.

For this, it deserves our respect, our praise and our everlasting gratitude.

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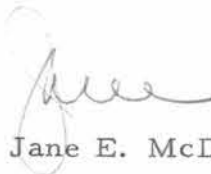
July 30th, 1965

Dear Mike:

Here is the script of the Vice
President's talk at the Lasker Awards luncheon.

It was taped by Radio & TV Reports,
but it was not a good job, according to Ruth Maier,
and there were some gaps she had to fill in with notes
she had taken, as well as mistakes to correct. This is
the result of their combined efforts and is the only
record available of the speech.

All best,



Jane E. McDonough

Mr. Mike Gorman
Nat'l Committee Against Mental Illness
1028 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

REVISION OF TALK AS ACTUALLY DELIVERED

BY

VICE-PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

AT THE

16TH ANNUAL ALBERT LASKER MEDICAL JOURNALISM AWARDS LUNCHEON

SHERATON-EAST HOTEL

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1965

Thank you very much...Dr. Rusk, my dear friend Mary Lasker, the Award winners, distinguished guests, one and all -- I know that this is a very important and exciting day for each and every one of us. And if I've ever seen a beautiful luncheon, both in terms of the flowers, the decorations, and the people, this is it. And I want to agree with the eminent Dr. Rusk, and say, that as distinguished as the dais may be, as I look out over this audience, I see the people that have made life better, more enjoyable, more meaningful to millions and millions of our fellow citizens -- indeed, people all over the world.

I come here today for the specific purpose of congratulating and paying respect and tribute to those fine people who have earned the highest award for excellence in medical journalism. One of the great needs of our time is communication. We have perfected the mechanics of communication; now our need is to find ways and means of truly communicating the mass of information that is available. These awards in medical journalism have a meaning far beyond the recognition of excellence in medical reporting and interpretation. They really symbolize the winged victory of man's understanding over ignorance and man's conscience and triumph of the healing art over pain and death. There is a special significance in these, the 16th Annual Albert Lasker Medical Journalism Awards, and they're mighty timely.

1965 is truly a year of health decisions. It is, and will be, a year of policy breakthroughs against the backlog of American health needs. And when we speak of American health needs, because there is no boundary, there are no artificial lines of sovereignty over medical science, we speak, then, of the world's health needs.

Our country is poised today to achieve many of the goals which Lasker Awardees of previous years have had envisioned in their pioneering articles, their broadcasts, and their telecasts. You know, we often-times say, when we speak of the space program, with its great adventure into outer space, we speak of the stories of Buck Rogers. I wonder if any of us have paused just long enough to recall that some of the articles, broadcasts, and telecasts of years back told us of the miracles to come in the healing arts. And at that time, those of us who may have been doubters, may have looked with a note of suspicion or even of cynicism upon those prognostications and prophesies, but they've come true, and there are yet greater miracles to be.

The Congress of the United States is now in the process of considering -- and hopefully enacting -- the most comprehensive, enlightened program of health legislation ever recommended to the Congress by an American President. And I believe I'm in the position to report to you that every single measure that has been recommended in the President's Health Message of 1965 will be the law of the land before the first session of the 89th Congress concludes its business.

Now the goal of this program is to protect, to enhance, to strengthen the most important asset that this nation possesses -- our people, that great resource, that undeveloped resource in many instances -- the people. We seek to conserve and to develop our most precious resource -- human lives -- from the ravages of man's most ancient enemy, or should I say enemies -- disease, ignorance, fear, and poverty. And every one of these programs is tied together. The battle against disease is indeed at the root causes of poverty. The battle against poverty surely affects the individual and the public health. And when we strike blows against hate and fear, we surely do something for the mental health and the physical health of the nation and the people.

Now, to defeat these scourges and many others, the President submitted a wide program to the Congress -- a wide range of legislative weapons. And in the field of health, in particular, these weapons are designed to make available modernized and increased numbers of medical facilities. These are the arsenals of the war

on disease, to overcome critical shortages of skilled professional personnel, as in the new Community Mental Health Centers, to provide a sound financial basis for health services for the elderly; to offer expanded service against mental retardation, as well as against other forms of disability; to foster loans for comprehensive group practice; and to give added health protection to consumers. But the President's many notable recommendations -- and many of these recommendations come right from the people in this room today -- those are not the product of one mind, or of a political party -- they are the product of the medical profession, and of those deeply concerned in medical research and patient care. But the most notable, it seems to me, of these recommendations, and will be so judged by future generations, is the proposed establishment of multi-purpose regional medical complexes. These complexes, or centers, as urged by the President's Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer and Stroke, will assure more -- and more uniform -- excellence in research, in education, and in patient care. Let me pause once again to say that the word excellence should be drilled into us like an article of faith, because mediocrity is for somebody else, it's not for Americans. Unless we establish as our standard excellence of conduct and performance, we cannot possibly fulfill our mission.

Now, these centers or these complexes; and the improvement of, or the excellence in research, in education, and medical care, should be not just in the big cities, but should service every town and hamlet in every region; they should be centered not just in great Teaching Hospitals, but also in community hospitals, and geared not just for specialists, but for general practitioners.

We laymen know -- and are proud and grateful -- that American medicine, including post-graduate medical education, has long been pre-eminent in the world. But many of our ablest physicians have reminded us that, in these fast-moving times -- with new information pouring in and new techniques proliferating -- professional knowledge becomes rapidly obsolete. And knowledge known by some, and not by many, is knowledge denied to the public good. Professional skills, unless sharpened, like tools, rust. The result can be and regrettably has been a serious lag in putting new medical discoveries

to work, applying the knowledge to human needs.

Now, American doctors do want to practice the very best medicine for every patient. Physicians know better than anyone that, in medical diagnosis, in treatment and rehabilitation, too little and too late can spell heartbreak for patients and their loved ones. Therefore, we must not lose a single day in conquering disease. This is a war that we must wage with every resource at our command, and this is one that we can afford to accelerate.

I shall not go into the statistics, you know them well enough. But let me say that man has proven there is little that is really "natural" or "inevitable" about many once fatal diseases. Polio was once considered a "natural" cause of disability, as well as rheumatic fever. Influenza and tuberculosis were long viewed as "naturally" heavy killers, and we sort of put up with it. But free people can accomplish a great deal when they lift their sights -- or to put it more directly, when they make up their minds they're going to do the impossible. Anybody can do what's possible today. We have the tools to do that, if we're just half way good. Our task is to do the impossible year in and year out. That qualifies us for greatness.

Now, most progress has occurred when men and women have literally risen up against what they once considered their fate, and have chosen to defy the so-called inevitable. At these times they have declared this evil condition need not be. So it was when man decided that slavery need not be, as it was when America decided that there would be equal rights and equal opportunity for every American, regardless of his race, color or creed. And so it was, last year, when America decided in its richest period, at the height of its prosperity, that the one-fifth of our nation that were afflicted, or were the victims of poverty, -- that poverty need not be. And now we are about to declare again, that most diseases need not be. And the soldiers to win that battle are right here in this room; and their associates, throughout this land.

I repeat, this war against disease is one that we do want to wage, and we ought to be accelerating day by day.

The world looks to America for medical leadership, in fact, for scientific leadership. There are few institutions in this vast country which are capable of doing so much additional good for humanity. There's a great organization in Bethesda called the National Institute of Health.

When an NIH delegation has gone abroad -- and by the way, I do not wish to say this is the only one, there are so many -- but when an NIH delegation has gone abroad, no foreign mob has ever hoisted a sign or a placard, and said, "Yankee Go Home". No American flag has ever been torn down because the United States shipped Salk or Sabin vaccine to a people fearing a polio epidemic, or brought in inoculation against measles, or brought in medical research and medical aid.

Yes, I know they do cost money. But they are investments. The cost of sickness so outweighs the cost of research and cure, that it is almost ridiculous even to make a comparison.

This country loses a precious asset every time one of our citizens needlessly or prematurely dies. America's most important budget, which we all too seldom think of, is its human budget. And this human budget has been more out of balance over the years than any national or Federal budget. Why? Because hundreds of thousands of our citizens have either been disabled, or have died ahead of their time -- disabled and unattended -- disability without rehabilitation. And thank goodness, we have learned that we can rehabilitate the disabled. And thank goodness, that in recent years we have learned that we can cure the sick.

Now, how much might humanity have benefited if, for example, medical science could have added just one more year to the productive life of, let us say, Albert Einstein or Enrico Fermi? Or a hundred more you can think of. Who can estimate what mankind lost from the untimely deaths of our other great scientists -- or musicians, or statesmen, or humanitarians, or artists? But famous or unknown, important or just plain ordinary, every human being deserves every day of life that science can win for him.

We are determined to extend life expectancy, and we call for allies, no matter where the allies may come from. There is no

politics, international or domestic, nor should there be, to medical science and medical research. We call for help from every group in our population. To do so, science must learn more about the very process of life, if we're going to extend the expectancy of life; about what goes on at the cellular level in elderly years. And may I add, too, in pre-natal care -- to learn more just about the beginning of life itself, of which we know far too little. In exploring these mysteries, the mysteries of inner man, there is every bit as much excitement as exploring the mysteries of outer space. And I wish to say that, as Chairman of the Space Council, I see no conflict of interest in the allocation of resources to the exploration of the universe, and the exploration of the mysteries of life itself on this earth. The most important race is not the space race or the arms race. It is the human race, right here. And you are the people that can do something about it. And as we perfect the human race, we make possible the exploration of the space race, or at least its acceleration.

By the way, Mary, and doctors, I want to say that I've taken a great interest in space medicine as a layman. I've learned more in the last four months, as Vice-President, about the medical research that is going on in space medicine than I ever knew in my preceding 53 years. And it's fascinating, and we're learning from all over the world, every place. We're learning more about information, the sending out of information. I could give you a talk today which I shall not, but to me it was exceedingly fascinating. It only underscores one thing, the importance of information dissemination. The problem in America, with its science and technology, is that we're learning too much too fast, and disseminate it too slowly. The process of learning is possibly not too fast, the accumulation of knowledge surely is not too fast. But we're accumulating knowledge on a four-lane highway, and putting it into the city through a simple little country street. You can't do it. There's a glut, and one of these days we're going to have to do something about it, and I intend to be around to help.

Someday we will be able to tell the world that science has discovered the secrets of aging or of cancer, or of muscular

dystrophy, or of multiple sclerosis, or mental retardation. That news will outrank in importance even the wonderful tidings that man has landed on the moon. If American can get excited about putting a man on the moon in 1970, why can't we get excited about putting a lot of people on their feet by the same date?

Our people hunger for a good life -- for -- as we say -- the pursuit of happiness. This is an article of faith for them, and the pursuit of happiness is impossible in the midst of disease and distress.

The American public is hungry for more news about health. The American public is eager to learn still more about how to keep well and get well. An informed layman is a crucial ally of medicine -- both on broad issues of public policy and as an individual patient. Professionals recognize that particular skill and care are necessary in communicating complex medical facts to the citizen, to the layman. Doctors also appreciate the tremendous value of sound medical communication to the public. Outstanding journalism -- such as you honor here today -- stimulates the very best in society. It banishes fear, it raises hopes, it gives meaning to life.

Excellent journalism focuses, informs, arouses, and inspires. For readers, listeners and viewers, such journalism raises neither false hopes nor false fears.

Great medical journalism, which we honor, is the cornerstone for the good life in the Great Society. It helps make whole man's understanding, and thereby helps make possible man's health.

For this, it deserves our respect, our praise, and our everlasting gratitude.

And I am singularly honored to be included on this program, and to pay my respects to those who have justly earned and merited the high award which is being given to them today.

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