

LAW OFFICES

SHOOK, HARDY, OTTMAN, MITCHELL & BACON

915 GRAND AVENUE
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64108
TELEPHONE BALTIMORE 1-3811
AREA CODE 816

SAM B. SEBREE (1888-1965)
EDGAR SHOOK
DAVID R. HARDY
JAMES H. OTTMAN
EUGENE P. MITCHELL
CHARLES L. BACON
DAVID H. CLARK
LANE O. BAUER
FRANK P. SEBREE
FREDERICK BEINH
WILLIAM W. SHINN
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ROBERT K. WALDO
LEE E. STANFORD
DAVID R. HARDY
WILLIAM G. ZIMMERMAN

January 13, 1968

*HEW - Morbidity Study
(1967)*

TO: Frederick P. Haas, Esq.
Cy Hetsko, Esq.
H. Henry Ramm, Esq.
Paul D. Smith, Esq.
Addison Yeaman, Esq.

This supplements my letter of January 11, 1968, with respect to Dr. Theodor Sterling. Because of the obvious importance of expediting work on the morbidity study, I flew to St. Louis last Thursday afternoon and spent several hours with Dr. Sterling. I communicated to him most of the observations enclosed with my earlier letter of January 11 as well as others. He said that he had made certain changes himself particularly with respect to the section on age adjustment. It is suggested that the enclosed pages 49-74 of the "Evaluation" be substituted for pages 49-73 previously sent to you and that the enclosed pages 11-14 of the "Abstract and Summary" be substituted for pages 11-15 as previously sent. */// N.S.*

Dr. Sterling assured me that he could get the data-- in the form of "tapes"--upon which the morbidity study is based. He also stated that he believed there were people in the Public Health Service who disagreed with the use to which the morbidity study was and is being put and that they would welcome its being "shown up" for what it is. He suggested, in this regard, that a contract be written with a university--such as Washington University, with which he is associated--to accomplish the following: (1) obtain and analyze the basic data upon which the 1967 morbidity study is based; (2) arrange a meeting of persons both within and without the Public Health Service to discuss the morbidity study and to examine the underlying data.

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Dr. Sterling is convinced that the result of such a meeting would be to reach the same conclusions which he has reached. He says that he believes the Public Health Service would stop using the morbidity study if his proposed program was followed. He further suggests that this might provide an avenue for re-examining some of the conclusions of the 1964 Surgeon General's Report since it would certainly cast doubt upon conclusions reached in the 1967 report.

In any event, Sterling is convinced that most statisticians examining the morbidity report will agree with him. He is convinced that he was right in forwarding his other papers for consideration by the Surgeon General and says that unless there is some disavowance with respect to the morbidity report that he will publish an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association. In any event, he has agreed to testify before Congress with respect to the report and is presently at work upon such testimony.

Professor Sterling said he didn't believe that the industry realized how bad the morbidity study actually was. He suggested a one-day meeting of representatives of the industry to hear his views on it. He would also expand at such a meeting, he said, with respect to his proposals for further examination of the study.

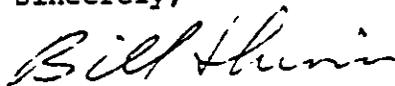
Shortly after receiving the material which I sent you on January 11, 1968, I asked Sterling to prepare a short statement that would set forth in simple lay language his lengthy critique. In response to that request, I have received the enclosed document, "Short Recapitulation of Major Points from: An Evaluation and Critique of the Report Linking Cigarette Smoking to General Morbidity and Disability." It seems to me that this particular document is easier to understand than the others and that the points are made in a more effective way. It should be kept in mind in reading the other documents ("Evaluation"

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and the "Abstract and Summary") that they were to be submitted to the Public Health Service and that the people reading them would be versed in the use and language of statistics. I anticipate that the Congressional material which we will receive from Sterling will be more in line with the enclosed paper (although, of course, it will not be limited to the two major shortcomings observed by Sterling but will also include other observations).

I told Dr. Sterling that Dave would talk with him soon concerning his proposal to obtain and analyze the data underlying the morbidity study. We would appreciate your observations.

Sincerely,



William W. Shinn

WWS/r

Enclosures

cc: Senator Earle Clements
H. Thomas Austern, Esq.
Abe Krash, Esq.