

5-19-1905

**Correspondence, John C. Stennis, John W. Gardner, November  
15-December 7, 1966**

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
9000 ROCKVILLE PIKE  
BETHESDA, MD. 20014

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orig. to  
de Kahl

REFER TO:

DEC 8 1966

Dear Senator Stennis:

In carrying out the responsibilities delegated to the Public Health Service for compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, our goal has been to obtain voluntary compliance in all possible cases. Members of the Office of Equal Health Opportunity field staff have made visits to hospitals where existing policies or practices did not permit a finding of compliance with Title VI. The majority of these visits resulted from information submitted by administrators of hospitals or through individual complaints of discrimination. In some instances revisits have been necessary. Visits and revisits were carried out to clarify issues and wherever possible to assist hospital administrators so that voluntary compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act could be obtained.

Employees from programs of the Public Health Service and the Social Security Administration were utilized in this work. Prior to their assuming this responsibility, training sessions were held to maximize their understanding and effectiveness for work in this most difficult area. Additionally, Regional Coordinators for the Office of Equal Health Opportunity continue close surveillance of the quality of performance of field representatives. In a few instances an individual has been unable to assume this responsibility and has not been continued in the assignment.

The staff of the Office of Equal Health Opportunity has made a concerted effort to carry out this responsibility in an understanding and helpful manner while remaining firm on principle. My staff and I have received very favorable comments by hospital administrators and others concerning both the interest and conduct of our representatives in the field. I am therefore concerned with the instances referred to in your letter of November 16 in which you question the conduct of our staff. If you will provide me with specific information, I will review the circumstances and take appropriate action.

More than 3,000 visits to hospitals have been carried out and with the excellent cooperation of hospital administrators,

important changes have been implemented in many institutions in the interest of all persons requiring hospital care. The difficulty in carrying out necessary changes in some situations is appreciated. While only a relatively small number of hospitals interested in participation in programs of Federal assistance have not yet come into compliance, we shall continue to make every possible effort to assist them so that such voluntary changes can occur and these important health resources may be available to all. We shall also continue to carry out our evaluation of the conduct and performance of this work.

Sincerely yours,

/s/William H. Stewart

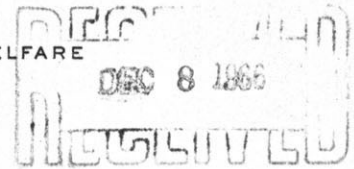
Surgeon General

Honorable John Stennis  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON



DEC -7 1966

JOHN STENNIS

Dear Senator Stennis:

Your November 15th letter raised criticisms made about our hospital compliance staff, questioned the treatment of some Public Health Service personnel, and inquired about progress in our implementation of the room assignment policy which we discussed together in October. I want to assure you that I understand your concern and appreciate your frankness in raising these matters.

We have sought the best people we could find to staff our Title VI compliance programs. They have been trained to carry out their difficult assignment as effectively and as politely as possible. If different field personnel suggest varying approaches to a hospital for achieving compliance, this is usually because earlier suggestions have not proven effective. I assure you that any allegations of improper treatment by our staff of a recipient will be thoroughly investigated and resolved.

While a few employees detailed to work on Title VI compliance have expressed unhappiness at their assignment, many others, on the other hand, have described their experiences as most rewarding.

Finally, I have advised the Surgeon General to take appropriate measures to ensure that his staff at all levels fully understands and implements the policy of the Department with respect to the assignment of patients to accommodations in hospitals.

On the whole, I think we have had excellent cooperation from hospital officials and from our staff. We shall continue our best efforts to avoid the kinds of criticism you have encountered.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Honorable John Stennis  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

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DeKalb, Mississippi  
November 15, 1966

Honorable John W. Gardner  
Secretary, Department of Health,  
Education, and Welfare  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

You and Surgeon General Stewart will recall I am sure that during the conferences with the two of you and Senators Russell, Hill, and me, my colleagues and I mentioned the demands and inspections that have been made by the representatives of HEW, including the repeated visits and severe treatment given some of the hospital administrators and others by some of these representatives.

Since reaching home, I have made some effort to determine first-hand what the situation is, and I now wish to call to your particular attention some of the situations I have found. I find that some of the hospitals have been subjected to visits from many inspectors, each with a different set of demands. These differences are not only in degree, but are different in nature, and it leaves the administrators of the hospitals highly uncertain as to what the requirements are.

Next, frequently, what I would consider very poor approaches, are made by your personnel with demanding attitudes, and at times these men have the attitude of one exercising police power. I have seen one letter demanding certain action within twenty-four hours after the date of the letter and the letter was not received until the lapse of forty-eight hours.

I receive repeated reports that these agents travel in two's or three's. Frequently, one of the group will be a man of some judgment and experience, while the other two are just far, far below the usual standards of knowledge and attitude that would be expected from a Federal employee.

The sum total of the foregoing is that your men are demanding and very severe. Many of them are inadequately trained, and our institutions, administering to the physical welfare of all the people, are put on the defensive and more or less prosecuted for failure to promptly adjust to all the social changes demanded.

I am not a complainer by nature, but I have made up my mind to give this matter as much personal attention as I can and to follow up on it in every way that I can. In the meantime, I would like to be advised of what you have done since the Congress adjourned with regard to the

guidelines and representations as reflected by your letter to Senator Hill while the appropriation bill was in conference.

Before closing, I want to say again, as I said at our conferences, I think the personnel of the Public Health Service are being subjected, at least many of them, to such severe treatment as to very materially adversely affect the morale and effectiveness of this fine group. I have always been well impressed with them, and, frankly, I believe that they are being abused, degraded, and down-graded by those who are trying to enforce the hospital guidelines as if they were police measures.

I will appreciate hearing from you at your early convenience regarding the foregoing matters and will deeply appreciate any personal attention that you can and will give to the correction of the foregoing situations.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

John Stennis  
United States Senator

JS/mw