

August 15, 2009

General James Jones, National Security Adviser
The White House
1600 PA Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500
&
Dr. Frances Collins, Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20892

Dear General Jones and Dr. Collins:

The United States has a new, political opportunity to strengthen ties with China and provide leadership for a rapid learning international health system that touches the lives of men and women throughout the world. I enclose a letter to Dr. John Holdren reviewing the scientific issues related to this opportunity.

The US project should move very quickly, at least with respect to discussions with China. The Chinese government privatized its national health system and found the results unsatisfactory. It has decided to spend \$124 billion over the next three years for major reforms. Electronic health records are to play a key, but still undefined, national role. There is a historic scientific opportunity, if the Obama Administration acts quickly, to suggest and develop translatable coding systems shaped by the research community (for China's 1.4 billion people and our 300 million people) and for health professionals in both countries to work together.

The Chinese government is finding many of the same problems of managing a complex health system for 1.4 billion people as we are finding in the United States.

Concerning strategic planning for a wider NIH initiative and international political benefits relevant to a decision by President Obama, I enclose an excerpt, "Health as Opportunity: A New Look at a Successful Paradigm," from the National Intelligence Council's report, Strategic Implications of Global Health (December 2008).

If further discussion would be useful, please call me at (301)-365-5241.

Yours truly,

(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
International Scientific Networks

Cc: Dr. John Holdren – OSTP
Hon. Judith McHale, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy