February 7, 1959

Dr. John R. Paul  
Yale University School of Medicine  
333 Cedar Street  
New Haven 11, Connecticut

Dear John:

I have recently written a rather lengthy paper entitled: "Present Position of Immunization Against Poliomyelitis with Live Virus Vaccine." Because I needed more carbon copies of it than we could produce Dr. Murray very kindly agreed to have multiple copies made in his office and you should receive one of them very soon. Needless to say, I would be very glad to have any comments that you might wish to make.

The main purpose of this letter is to ask your thoughts on 2 matters which have recently come up for discussion:

1) As you know there has been some discussion with Dr. Payne, who I understand will be in New Haven very soon, regarding a projected meeting on live poliovirus vaccine under the auspices of WHO. When Dr. Payne first asked my opinion about the time of holding such a meeting I thought that by the end of May or early June enough information would be available on the various field trials currently in progress to permit both definitive evaluations as well as decisions. I was in Pearl River Thursday where I had a conference with Doctors Parker and Cox and it appeared that the serologic and other follow-up work on the extensive field trials that they have been doing in South America is not likely to be completed by the end of May. Similarly, the very large field trials scheduled to begin in Mexico on or about February 16th are also not likely to have all the needed data by the end of May. The late start of the program in the Soviet Union will, I imagine, prevent them from having all the data by
the end of May. Accordingly, both the Lederle people and I were inclined to favor a much later date for such a conference, namely August or September of 1959.

2) Also during our discussions at Lederle on Thursday I raised the question of the desirability of having an independent group of people experienced in field and laboratory studies of poliomyelitis to make actual field visits in the various places where large scale field trials with live poliovirus vaccine are under progress in order that an independent estimate of the validity of the clinical and virologic surveillance may be available. Dr. Parker of the Lederle Laboratories was not unsympathetic with this suggestion with regard to the areas in South America in which they are working and I particularly urged him to do so because we have now made arrangements to test in my laboratory the neurotropism of the strains that they are currently using in South America by the same method that I have used all along. As regards field trials with my material it would involve visits to Mexico, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The type 1 epidemic in Singapore has been over for some time and Dr. Hale, who is on his way back to England now, expects to write his report very soon. Just when the other types will now be administered to the same children in Singapore has not yet been decided. I would greatly appreciate hearing from you regarding your thoughts about the organization of such a group to cover the various field trials in different parts of the world.

Although I originally planned to go to Europe at the end of March to attend an international symposium on the neuropathology of obscure types of encephalitis that meeting has now been changed to May 10 to 15. I have also been invited to visit Czechoslovakia and Moscow at that time so that I expect to be in both of those places at the end of May or perhaps early June. I hope very much that we may have an opportunity to get together before too long and discuss some of the problems of mutual interest.
With best wishes and kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,

Albert B. Sabin, M.D.

ABS:meb

P.S. Since dictating this letter to you yesterday I received a letter dated January 31st from Chumakov. In this letter he says that they had completed preliminary tests on 25,000 people aged 2 months to 25 years including more than 15,000 who had not previously received Salk vaccine, among them 1,000 infants under 1 year of age. Since they have had no reaction they are now planning to start within the next few weeks a still larger trial in the Lithuanian republic on 500,000 people up to 18 years of age and in the Estonian republic on about 300,000 people. They will use not only the vaccine that I sent them but some of their own lots which they have now prepared from the vaccine that I sent. He writes that those lots have now yielded satisfactory results in repeated tests in animals. He furthermore writes that he now hopes to fulfill a commitment to vaccinate 2 million children in 1959.

He also indicated that the construction of his new institute will not be finished until the end of 1959 and they are not making any preparations for its inauguration. On the basis of all this information I now expect to be in Moscow probably the last week in May or first week in June.

cc: Dr. A. M. - M. Payne