October 15, 1951

Dear Doctor:

You will recall that in June of this year I called your attention to scientific observations linking together various types of parenteral injections with paralytic poliomyelitis. Based on these observations, we offered recommendations as to the postponement of elective injections during the poliomyelitis season. We indicated that we would inform you as soon as the giving of these injections might be resumed.

At the present time we can say that reported poliomyelitis in Upstate New York reached its peak of onset during the week ending August 25 and since that time has dropped consistently. October 15 appears to be an appropriate date for terminating the period considered to be of hazard, with one reservation. If poliomyelitis continues to be present in unusual numbers as determined by the health officer in a given area, injections should be postponed until further notice by the health officer.

Additional studies carried out by this Department and others during the past summer have tended to confirm the observations linking poliomyelitis to injections. On the other hand, it must be stated that the role of injections in producing or altering the occurrence of paralysis represents probably a small part of the total problem. Nevertheless, in our opinion, it is of sufficient importance to warrant our earlier recommendations that elective injections be avoided during the poliomyelitis season in persons over six months of age and in all age groups in areas where poliomyelitis is especially prevalent.

The acceptance of the recommendations by the practicing physicians throughout Upstate New York has been most gratifying and the Department expresses its appreciation for their cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Herman E. Hilleboe, M.D.
Commissioner of Health