April 22, 1954

TO: All Grantees of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis

FROM: Mr. Basil O'Connor

Subject: Experimentation on Human Subjects

In the development of any preventive or therapeutic measure to combat paralytic poliomyelitis there comes a time when preliminary trials, previously carried out in experimental animals, must be extended to human beings. To individuals of the caliber of grantees supported by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis it hardly seems necessary to urge unusual caution and careful thought before taking such a momentous step.

My duty, however, compels me, in addition, to advise you that the National Foundation would be subject to suit in the event of any unfortunate accidents occurring as a result of human vaccinations. Precedents already established by this organization in the cases of Dr. Howard Howe and Dr. Jonas Salk involved adequate arrangements for accident as well as for health insurance coverage.

For those reasons we are requesting that you advise the National Foundation well in advance, whenever you plan to carry out human trials, particularly with a potential vaccine or a new therapeutic agent.