The enclosed letter to Dr. Henderson was mailed to him on February 22. A copy of the letter was sent at the same time to Dr. Fishbein. To Dr. Fishbein was also sent a covering letter and a copy of this is enclosed.

The letter to Dr. Henderson was released to the Press on February 24 with the consent of its five other signers. It was released because the signers believed immediate publication to be imperative and feared from experience with the publication of the Protest in the Journal of the American Medical Association that its publication there might be delayed.

It now appears that certain newspapers interpreted the letter to Dr. Henderson as expressing the views of the entire group of signers of the Protest, whereas it was the expression of the views of the signers of the letter to Dr. Henderson only. We should like to have submitted the letter to all the signers of the Protest for their approval but time was lacking.

E. A. Park
February 22, 1949

Dr. Morris Fishbein  
Editor, Journal of the  
American Medical Association  
535 North Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois  

Dear Doctor Fishbein:

I am transmitting herewith a copy of a letter addressed today to Dr. Elmer L. Henderson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Association, on behalf of Drs. Baehr, Bauer, Helmholtz, Morgan, Wood and myself which we would ask you to publish in an early number of the Journal, so that there need not be a misunderstanding of the purposes of the Protest signed by 148 (now 167) members of the Association.

The signers of the Protest and of this letter have had no intention of organizing an opposition group within or outside of the American Medical Association. Their purpose has been to apprise the officers of the Association as emphatically as possible of opinions which we know to be more widely prevalent throughout the profession than was indicated in your Editorial on February 19, 1949.

Sincerely yours,

Edwards A. Park, M. D.

w
enclosure
February 22, 1949

Dr. Elmer L. Henderson, Chairman
Board of Trustees
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Doctor Henderson:

A Protest against past and recent attitudes and actions of
the American Medical Association on the extension of medical care was addressed by
148, now 167, signatories on January 31st, 1949 to the Trustees of the Association,
and to the editor of the JOURNAL, together with a covering letter, in the hope
that the views of so large a number of physicians with experience in medical
education, scientific research and clinical practise would receive respectful
attention. To the inquiry of your Board, whether the signers of the Protest have
a program of their own to present, we must respond that the formulation of a com-
prehensive plan for the country can best be developed by the Association, rather
than by a segment of the profession.

The twelve proposals announced on February 14th by the
American Medical Association are merely statements of objectives customary as a
preliminary procedure in drafting a plan. They fall far short of a plan that
could be regarded as a reasonably adequate substitute for the Wagner-Murray-Dingell
Bill, opposition to which is our common objective. Proposal 3, which deals with
prepayment for medical care, is advanced by the Association as an alternative for
national compulsory medical insurance. This proposal is phrased in such general
terms and is so vague that it does not constitute a plan for the extension of
medical care. To expedite the development of state programs throughout the country,
and to correct the existing deficiencies in medical care as rapidly and efficiently
as possible, Congressional legislation will be required, under which federal
grants-in-aid can be made to states and local communities to assist them in making
the preliminary studies essential to the development of programs and later, in
carrying out these programs in accordance with medical standards to be proposed
by the American Medical Association. Until the Association's proposals encompass a plan for the entire country which can provide comprehensive preventive and curative services for persons of moderate income as well as to the indigent, we believe that the public will not regard the Twelve Point Program of the American Medical Association as an adequate alternative for national compulsory medical insurance. Because we are disturbed by the inevitable consequences of ill-considered federal legislation, the signers of this letter urge the American Medical Association to face the issue squarely before it is too late.

With this idea in mind, we request the Association to call a conference under its own auspices of representatives of labor, industry, the farm groups, medical practice, medical education and research, dental education and research, hospitals, public health and other interested lay and medical groups. Individuals who could contribute ideas and experience should also be invited. We urge the Association to recognize the right of the consumer to participate in the development of medical care plans. The consumers outnumber the medical profession 1000 to 1. Such a conference under the auspices of the American Medical Association should not be for the renewal of ancient debate, as in the recent National Health Assembly, but should be rather for a meeting of minds. A primary function of the conference should be the formation of a joint planning committee which could subsequently organize and direct the necessary studies and prepare the details of a truly comprehensive plan of preventive and curative medicine for the nation. This constructive development could well be supported from the $25.00 assessment fund.

The American Medical Association has it in its power to develop the natural solution to the problem of medical care and thereby render a service to the people of the United States commensurate with some of its great past achievements.

Sincerely yours,

George Baehr, M.D.  Hugh Morgan, M.D.
Walter Bauer, M.D.  Edwards A. Park, M.D.
H. F. Helmholtz, M.D.  W. Barry Wood, M.D.

Signed on behalf of the above by  Edwards A. Park, M.D.