MEMORANDUM

TO: All CDC Consultants
   Service Chiefs
   Epidemic Intelligence Officers
   Epidemiological Staff
   Mr. Odom Fanning

SUBJECT: News Release Concerning Equine Encephalomyelitis

This memorandum is to call to your attention a news release of August 29, 1951, written at CDC and issued by the Surgeon General’s Office, concerning the isolation of Western equine encephalomyelitis virus from wild birds, as reported by Dr. Cockburn.

Certain of the news services rewrote that release inadvertently giving the impression that those isolations were the first evidence establishing wild birds as important in the epidemiology of Western equine infections; the intent of the original release was clearly not to emphasize such a point of view, but rather to indicate that the presently reported isolations of virus corroborated hypotheses originally constructed from other types of information.

The wording of the original release was completely acceptable to the professional personnel involved here; it is unfortunate, however, that the wording was not so carefully chosen that misinterpretation by the news services would be impossible. I am sure that you will appreciate the embarrassment of the professional staff and of the public information office here.

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Chief, Epidemiologic Services