TO: Director, National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases

Date: April 19, 1963

Members: Panel for Picornaviruses
Panel for Respiratory and Related Viruses

FROM: Chief, Laboratory of Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases

RE: Letter dated April 12, 1963 to Director, NIAID, from Chairman, Panel on Respiratory and Related Viruses

As a member of both panels, I found myself on the one hand sympathizing with the arguments put forth by the Chairman and the Panel for Respiratory and Related Viruses that the rhinoviruses be made the responsibility of that panel. This responsibility cannot be avoided by either panel, even though international bodies also exist for this purpose. On the other hand, I feel that responsibility for picornaviruses must remain with the Picornavirus Panel, if only for taxonomic purposes.

Now that poliomyelitis is no longer a major problem, not only rhinoviruses, but all the picornaviruses will probably be found most frequently by those interested in undifferentiated respiratory illnesses. The Coxsackie and ECHO viruses occur in the respiratory tract during illness as frequently as in the stool, and in infants and children the evidence suggests that they are probably a more important cause of respiratory illnesses than rhinoviruses. Hence a better and more logical case could be made for the respiratory panel to take over all the picornaviruses.

As a member of both committees I would like to see only one committee handling all the viruses; however, until this is accomplished, I propose that some or most of the near future meetings be held jointly. I do not agree that part of the picornaviruses should be transferred from the Picornavirus Committee to the Respiratory Virus Panel, at least not at this time.

Robert J. Huebner, M.D.