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 SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE
 SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
 THE CENTER FOR THE HEALTH SCIENCES
 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

February 10, 1972

Dr. Edward Gall
 Vice President, University of Cincinnati
 Cincinnati General Hospital
 Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Dr. Gall:

As you requested, I write to inform you that it is my considered opinion that to subject the patients with cancer who were treated palliatively with whole or partial body radiation to interviews by investigatory committees would not be in the best medical interests of these patients. In my opinion to conduct such interviews would be definitely deleterious to the physical and emotional status of these patients and medically is definitely contraindicated!

Patients with cancer and their families live in a precarious position emotionally and physically. To subject them to investigatory interviews would upset what equilibrium and tolerance of their condition they have developed, would aggravate anxiety and well could precipitate pathological depression. Such emotional stresses are recognized as being extremely deleterious to the physical condition of cancer patients.

Additionally such interviews might well lead these patients to lose faith in the competence and motivation of the physicians responsible for the medical management of their disease -- an eventuality which could not but have serious detrimental effects on the emotional and physical status of these patients. From my discussions with the physicians and the psychologist responsible for the medical management of these patients, I am convinced that the compassionate concern and medical care provided by these conscientious men and women has been excellent, and it has been so judged by independent reviews by other qualified experts. I know of nothing more devastating to a sick cancer patient than to have his trust and faith in his physician placed in jeopardy or destroyed!!

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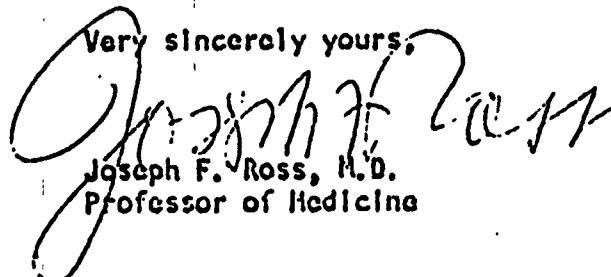
Finally, letters I reviewed from 9 of the 12 patients under consideration have unequivocally indicated their unwillingness to participate in investigatory interviews. I was informed that the other three patients also have written indicating similar unwillingness to participate in such interviews. Not only would it be unethical to force these patients to be interviewed, it would be inhumane!

Evidence presented to me indicates that already publicity associated with the accusations concerning this program has had very adverse effects upon at least two of these patients -- a truly tragic situation!

My opinions in this matter have been formed as a consequence of discussions with the responsible professional staff of the program: Dr. Eugene L. Saenger, Dr. Edward B. Silberstein, Dr. Harry Horowitz, Dr. Benard S. Aron, and Mrs. Carolyn H. Winget; review of the following documents: letter of 1/3/72 addressed to Senator Mike Gravel from Dr. Robert W. McConnell, President of the American College of Radiology; a "Progress Report of the Whole and Partial Body Radiation Therapy for Palliation of Cancer Patients, etc.", dated 12/13/71, prepared by Dr. E. L. Saenger; a memorandum prepared 2/2/72 by Mrs. Winget; and a review of letters from patients concerning their participation in interviews. I believe that the information gained by these discussions and reviews is adequate to justify my opinion.

I will be pleased to amplify any comments, should you wish me to do so.

Very sincerely yours,


Joseph F. Ross, M.D.
Professor of Medicine

JFR:phr

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