

February 3, 1953

Dr. Hamilton H. Anderson, Chairman
Department of Pharmacology and
Experimental Therapeutics
School of Medicine
University of California Medical Center
San Francisco 22, California

Dear Doctor Anderson:

I thank you for your letter of January 29, requesting information on the status and policies of The Kettering Laboratory, in relation to the conduct of toxicologic and other investigations.

We are prepared to consider any type of investigation which offers the possibility of obtaining really useful information by means of which the health and safety of industrial people may be improved and safeguarded. Naturally, such work runs over into the field of public health, as in the case of insecticides, problems of air and water pollution, etc., and that is not necessarily a deterrent to our interests, but our primary field is that of industrial health. Like yourselves, however, we never compromise with the fundamental purposes and rights of a university to investigate independently, and to publish the information obtained by ourselves. We add to this public policy, in the conduct of the affairs of the Laboratory, the policies that derive from professional considerations. Thus we regard certain items of information as privileged and confidential. I don't know just where we would be if this were put to legal test, but I'm sure that I convey the idea, when I say that we act, as nearly as we know how, in the relationship of doctor to patient, in dealing with those who come to us with bona fide medical and hygienic problems. In other words, we always reserve the right to publish, but we also reserve the professional right to exercise our own judgment concerning the desirability of publication in relation to the public interest. We also recognize, when plant problems are referred to us for in-plant investigations, that we are dealing with matters of responsibility and liability that relate to other people and to their property and employees, and that, to be able to give good advice, we must be entrusted with confidential information with which we must deal in confidence. These matters are dealt with in formal agreements, which, however, are always executed by the Board of Directors of the University, who can never qualify the responsibilities of the University to the public. (The University of Cincinnati is administered by a Board of Directors under the Charter of the City of Cincinnati.) In our experience

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THE KETTERING LABORATORY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE—EDEN AVENUE

DEPARTMENT OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND INDUSTRIAL HEALTH

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

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no problem has been troublesome except that involving the temporary protection of the patent position of an organization which comes to us with a material that is in a vulnerable situation in that regard. We have undertaken, voluntarily, to withhold information that would compromise their position until the patent situation is in the clear, or until, in our own opinion, the public interest required its release. The sponsor must accept this policy or go elsewhere.

Most of the time, we are burdened with more work than we can do, and we cannot expand our facilities beyond those which provide stable conditions of employment and interest for a full-time staff. Therefore, we cultivate long-term investigations as the nucleus of our work, and do other jobs when we want them and can schedule them to suit our own purposes. On the other hand, no job is too small if it merits attention and if we can do it, and since part of our function is that of training men in this field of work, we welcome a variety of experience as material for the educational process.

I have gone to some length to explain our position, since this would seem to be more helpful to you in judging when or whether you would wish to refer "patients" to us, than a brief reply to your questions would be.

As to commercial laboratories, I believe that there are few that are reliable in the quality of their work of this type, and I would not like to recommend any unless I could be sure of their quality. One which we believe to be satisfactory for toxicologic work is Hazleton Laboratories, directed by Lloyd W. Hazleton, Ph.D., P. O. Box 333, Falls Church, Virginia. I don't know the extent of the facilities of this laboratory, but I believe Hazleton will know the limitations and stay within them.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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Dictated but not read.

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