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January 9, 1991

Ronald M. Davis, M.D.
Director
Office on Smoking and Health
Center for Health Promotion and Education
Centers for Disease Control
12420 Park Lawn
Park Building, Room 1-10
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Dear Dr. Davis:

I was pleased to hear from Dr. Alan Blum of plans to launch an international journal on tobacco problems under the auspices of the British Medical Journal. In this regard, I am writing in my capacity as chairman of the department in which Dr. Blum serves as a full-time faculty member, to express my hope that you would recommend that the British Medical Journal select Dr. Blum as the first editor of the proposed journal.

For many years, first in private practice, then in the two departments of family medicine in which I have been privileged to serve as chairman, I have placed a high priority on education of the public and the health professions alike concerning tobacco use and promotion. Similarly, for each edition of the Textbook of Family Practice, which I edit, I have written what I am informed is one of the most comprehensive chapters on tobacco problems in any medical textbook. For the most recent edition, published in 1990, I invited Dr. Alan Blum to update and co-author this chapter.

As you know, Dr. Blum has contributed greatly to progress in combating the tobacco pandemic. He has been invited to lecture to nearly 900 groups in all 50 states over the past 16 years, including the commencement address at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the keynote address at the first American Medical Association Conference on Tobacco Use in America, and a plenary address broadcast nationally at the recent World Conference on Smoking and Health. He has also written more than 70 peer-reviewed articles on the subject.

But it is Dr. Blum's skills as a journalist, editor, and correspondent with numerous counterparts around the world that make him ideally suited to serve as the editor who will best get such a journal off and running. Dr. Blum pioneered the concept of theme issues of a general medical journal devoted entirely to a consideration of the tobacco pandemic. For his efforts he received the Washington Monthly Magazine's journalism award, the

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only such recognition of a medical editor in the magazine's history.

The selection of Dr. Blum as editor of the proposed journal would be a fitting recognition for his tireless efforts in combating tobacco use and promotion. Such a journal would be welcomed at Baylor College of Medicine (which recently became an entirely smoke-free campus, in no small measure due to efforts of individuals like Dr. Blum), and Dr. Blum would have my support in his efforts to obtain funding to provide for an editorial assistant in our department.

We recall fondly your excellent lecture to our department two years ago, and we look forward to your return.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Rakel, M.D.
Professor and Chairman
Department of Family Medicine

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