MEMORANDUM TO MR. KASSETT:

Pursuant to our further telephone conversation of today, there is enclosed herewith a copy of the reply I am sending to Mr. Law.

Thank you for referring this matter to me.

[Signature]

Surgeon General

[Date]
Dear Dr. Low:

The President has asked me to reply to your letter of November twenty-eighth, informing him of the views of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc., on one of the five recommendations which he made to the Congress in his message of November nineteenth, dealing with a National Health Program.

Your Association agrees with the President that the people of the United States need and should have insurance protection against the burdens of sickness costs. Your views differ with his on how to provide such protection.

Your Association favors voluntary medical-care insurance, and you refer to plans that already exist in twenty-two of the states. The President took these into account in his message when he said:

"Voluntary health insurance plans have been expanding during recent years; but their rate of growth does not justify the belief that they will meet more than a fraction of our people's needs. Only about 3 or 4 per cent of our population now have insurance providing comprehensive medical care."

Your Association alleges that "any compulsory health insurance program . . . . would inevitably impair the quality of medical care received by the people." I do not believe that this statement is supported by experience.

Your Association records its position as one of "unalterable" opposition to any compulsory insurance plan. From this it would appear that the Association shuts the door against further study or discussion of the subject.

Your Association's constitution and by-laws, you say, make it "impossible for its members to serve any compulsory local, state or federal health insurance program." It would
therefore appear that your Association and its members serve
notices of non-cooperation — indeed, of boycott — on the people
of the United States in the event they should decide to adopt
any compulsory plan through their governments by the processes
of democracy.

Ours is a representative form of government in which the
will of the people can be fully expressed. The President's
 proposal for a National Health Program doubtless will be fully
considered by the Congress, composed as it is of our duly elected
representatives. If we have faith in our form of government
it is incumbent upon all citizens to accede to the majority will
and to be governed thereby. It is therefore an alarming
symptom that any responsible group — especially a professional
group — should take a position of non-cooperation, even of
boycott, of a proposed law if such law be enacted.

The President has asked me to say that he believes that
an overwhelming majority of the people would condemn your
Association's policy of non-cooperation; and that he does not
believe that any appreciable number of physicians and surgeons
would join in your program — certainly not if they understood
the significance of what they would be doing.

Sincerely yours,

(Thom. Parran)
Surgeon General

Dr. Harold T. Low
President
Association of American
Physicians and Surgeons, Inc.
11 South LaSalle Street
Chicago 3, Illinois

TP: ap
Cleared with and approved by Mr. William D. Hassett in a telephone
conversation at 10:30 a.m. on December 11, 1945
TO THE PRESIDENT:

We respectfully direct your attention to the following:

The annual meeting of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons has just come to a close. This organization, whose membership is composed exclusively of ethical physicians and surgeons from every state in the Union, has requested me to address this letter to you personally in order to state clearly our stand in relation to your recent directive to the Congress concerning compulsory health insurance.

Please be advised that:

1. The members of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons are of the opinion that the brilliant record of the American medical profession, which is today pre-eminent among all the nations of the world, should not be interrupted or impaired.

2. Any compulsory health insurance program, including the one which you recently outlined and recommended to the Congress, would inevitably impair the quality of medical care received by the people. Therefore, the entire membership of the AAPVS is unalterably opposed to any and all compulsory schemes for distributing medical services.

3. Members of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons recognize, as you also do, the great and important role which modern physicians' and surgeons' services play in the life of our people. We furthermore recognize that brilliant though our record may be, we have not attained utopian perfection in the distribution of our services. We also recognize that under certain circumstances the expenses of unexpected serious illness and injury may have catastrophic effects upon the unfortunate individual's finances.

4. The potential hazard of sudden and unexpected serious illness should and can be adequately met by the same means that the individual protects himself from the hazards of
fire and theft — namely, through the application of voluntary insurance in one form or another. Already, 22 of the states have in operation voluntary medical insurance plans which are rapidly being expanded and improved.

(5) The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons just as heartily endorses the voluntary medical indemnification plans as it does firmly and unalterably oppose the concept of compulsion.

(6) The constitution and by-laws of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons makes it impossible for its members to service any compulsory local, state or federal health insurance program.

Yours respectfully,

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

[Signature]

Harold T. Low, M.B.
President

[Stamp]
MR. LATTA:

I believe Mr. Hazelton handed you the
 copy of letter which Dr. Parran sent over
 here.
 Have you sent it to file? If so, this
 can go to file.

Alice Winzer
MEMORANDUM FOR DR. THOMAS PARRAN:

Dear Dr. Parran:

Here is the letter addressed to the President by Dr. Harold T. Low, President, Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc., about which I was just speaking to you over the phone. I also enclose draft of a letter which was prepared for the President's signature. While the President highly approves the sentiments expressed in the proposed draft he thinks it might be unwise for him to sign it.

I should be glad to talk with you further about it over the phone if I can be helpful.

Regards.

WILLIAM D. HASSETT
Secretary to the President

Let. to Pres., dtd 11-28-45 from Dr. Low, copy attached. Carbon of draft prepared for Pres.'s signature, but not si
TO: Judge Rosenman  
The White House

FROM: I. S. Falk

SUBJECT: Letter to the President from the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons  
(Dr. Harold T. Low)

I attach a draft of a reply to Dr. Low.

The A.A.P.S. was organized in late 1943 or early 1944. It recruited its members for the purpose of contesting a boycott against any compulsory health insurance plan. Its by-laws require non-cooperation with other doctors, with hospitals, etc., under stated conditions. Its by-laws probably invite judicial inspection on issues similar to those in the Group Health Association case finally settled by the Supreme Court.

The membership of the A.A.P.S. has not been revealed. It is probably very small. Even the A.M.A. has been cold to it.

The A.A.P.S. is potentially troublesome. Hence a reply like the attached would probably serve a useful purpose.

J. S. X
I. S. Falk
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON  

December 6, 1945  

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.  

I asked Dr. Falk to get up a proposed answer to this letter from the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc.  

I am attaching the draft which I think is very good, although a little sharp.  

Maybe you would prefer to have Matt Connelly sign the letter in which event the wording can be changed a little.  

S. I. R.  

[Signature]
Dear Dr. Low:

I have your letter of November twenty-eighth, informing me of the views of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc., on one of the five recommendations which I made to the Congress in my message of November nineteenth, dealing with a National Health Program.

Your Association agrees with me that the people of the United States need and should have insurance protection against the burdens of sickness costs. Our views differ on how to provide such protection.

Your Association favors voluntary medical-care insurance, and you refer to plans that already exist in twenty-two of the states. I took these into account in my message when I said:

"Voluntary health insurance plans have been expanding during recent years; but their rate of growth does not justify the belief that they will meet more than a fraction of our people's needs. Only about 3 or 4 percent of our population now have insurance providing comprehensive medical care."

Your Association alleges that "any compulsory health insurance program . . . would inevitably impair the quality of medical care received by the people." I am informed that this statement is not supported by experience.

Your Association records its position as one of "unalterable" opposition to any compulsory insurance plan. From this it would appear that the Association shuts the door against further study or discussion of the subject.

Your Association's constitution and by-laws, you say, make it "impossible for its members to serve any compulsory local, state or federal health insurance program." It would therefore appear that your Association and its members serve notice of non-cooperation — indeed, of boycott — on the people of the United States in the event they should decide to adopt any compulsory plan through their governments by the processes of democracy.

I believe that an overwhelming majority of the people would condemn your Association's policy of non-cooperation; and
I cannot believe that any appreciable number of physicians
and surgeons would join in your program -- certainly not if
they understood the significance of what they would be doing.

Very sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Harold T. Low
President, Association of American
Physicians and Surgeons, Inc.
11 South LaSalle Street
Chicago 3, Illinois

[Signature]
Dr. Harold T. Low
President, Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc.
11 South LaSalle Street
Chicago 3, Illinois

My dear Dr. Low:

I have your letter of November 23, informing me of the views of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc., on one of the five recommendations which I made to the Congress in my Message of November 19, dealing with a National Health Program.

Your Association agrees with me that the people of the United States need and should have insurance protection against the burdens of sickness costs. Our views differ on how to provide such protection.

Your Association favors voluntary medical-care insurance, and you refer to plans that already exist in 20 of the states. I took these into account in my Message when I said:

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Your Association records its position as one of "unalterable" opposition to any compulsory insurance plan. From this it would appear that the Association shuts the door against further study or discussion of the subject.

Your Association's constitution and by-laws, you may, make it "impossible for its members to serve any compulsory local, state or federal health insurance program." It would therefore appear that your Association and its members serve notice of non-cooperation—indeed, of boycott—on the people of the United States in the event they should decide to adopt any compulsory plan through their governments by the processes of democracy.

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Sincerely yours,