December 19, 1935.

Dear Governor Lehman:

I beg leave to submit the following as approved by the Executive Committee of the Medical Society of the State of New York.

"It is granted that provision for medical care for the sick and injured and health guidance of the people of New York State are matters of pre-eminent importance. Many of our citizens have been reduced economically below the sustenance standard and have become wards on the community.

Slightly above this group are many who are unable to maintain their character and self-reliance and at the same time pay for medical care. This group requires some supplementation to their means.

From time immemorial the medical profession have carried the medical load of the community as a gratuity. To-day the physician has all of the tax obligations of every citizen and a constantly diminishing return from his professional activities.

Community responsibility for the indigent sick is a matter of application in certain areas of New York State and partial remuneration is made to physicians for their services. A continuation of the present gratuitous service of the profession is an economic impossibility.

Various legislative enactments have been made to provide medical care for the poor and needy. These statutes taken as a whole have been piled one upon the other without any clearcut general program. Many of the acts are not coordinated and are ineffective by reason of division or confusion between the various agencies concerned with their application. There is over-lapping of authority, inadequate regulation and marked deficiencies and, throughout the statutes as a whole, no cooperative understanding.

Other considerations enter into this problem - the citizen who in the long run must pay the "taxes", as well as the citizen who has invested his life's energies in professional knowledge and equipment. Uncontrolled admission to "free medical care", with no compensation to the physician, is an injustice not without serious consequential implications. The citizen "in need" should find assistance readily available. And the machinery of administration should be simple and understandable by all.
It is apparent therefore that there is a great need for the appointment by the Governor of a properly constituted commission. It is the considered opinion of the Medical Society of the State of New York that the major representation on this commission should be appointed from the ranks of experienced practitioners of medicine. There are twenty-two thousand physicians in the State of New York who, as a body, are more considerably concerned and more intimately acquainted with the problems incident to the giving of individualized medical service than other non-professional groups. The functions of this commission should be:

1. A study of the prevailing statutes and their social functions.
2. To recommend means of effective coordination.
3. To recommend measures for a modernized program of health and medical care for those who need assistance when confronted with health problems of sickness and injury".

With every expression of esteem,

Very sincerely yours

FREDERIC E. SONDEHN
President.