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September 29, 1965

*Inter Health  
Council*

Dear Doctor:

Those of us from Illinois who have had the gratifying experience of serving professionally aboard the S.S. HOPE, the unique modern medical center which floats to foreign lands where it teaches while it treats - can attest to its effectiveness. Every Illinois physician may participate in this important work by helping to provide the essential funds to keep it operating free of tax support.

I served as a Pediatrician on the ship in Guinea, on the west coast of Africa, and saw first hand the gratitude and thankfulness of the Guinean people. I can assure you that Project HOPE has done more than anything else to win friendship for America.

During its mission in Guinea, HOPE medical service touched 30,000 Africans directly. Such medical service was incidental to the special training given to approximately 200 medical personnel including native physicians, nurses, technicians, and the immunization of 120,000 children who experiences preventative medicine for the first time.

On August 14th the HOPE ship concluded the mission in Guinea. Prior to this she was almost a year in the port of Guayaquil, Ecuador providing her famous ship and shore-based medical teaching-service operation, working with the medical and nursing professions of Ecuador. There, as in Asia and Peru, she set an example of self help-the very core of Project HOPE. In January she will go to Corinto, Nicaragua to begin the fifth mission in a new area-Central America.

I am making this personal request to you for a donation. I have seen the evidence of the immeasurable good that such a gift can make. It is actually an investment in American that pays high dividends in international good will and understanding. It will be deeply appreciated by generations to come.

FriendSHIP really is a ship-the S. S. HOPE.

Sincerely yours,

*Harry T. Nagel, M.D.*

Harry T. Nagel, M.D.  
Broadview, Illinois

file later w/ Health Council N.Y.

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## Ship of Hope

ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1960, the S.S. *Hope* sailed for her first country of call, Indonesia. In September of 1964, this same S.S. *Hope* will sail directly from Ecuador to Guinea for her first visit to Africa. In the intervening four years the American medical staff aboard the trim white ship will have trained more than 2,750 doctors, nurses, and auxiliary medical personnel in Indonesia, South Vietnam, Peru, and Ecuador. By the end of *Hope's* stay in Ecuador next fall, some 5,000 major operations will have been performed by her staff in the countries visited. At least half a million people in these countries will have been immunized against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid fever, whooping cough, and other diseases disastrous to populations that are normally without adequate medical care.

When the *Hope* arrived in Saigon, her staff found local customs of mid-wifery and witch doctors deterrents to good health; crippling polio among children was also pathetically prevalent. Unarrested and unattended tumors were common throughout Southwest Asia. And in South America, harelips, facial malformations, cleft palates, and eye cataracts had a high rate of incidence.

One way of overcoming indigenous, crippling ill health in the countries visited has been to train local medical personnel who would in turn help future generations to enjoy a better physical existence. Volunteer teams of thirty to thirty-five medical and surgical specialists, working without pay, have been flown to the ship on a rotating basis for tours of duty of from two to four months,

for the need for surgery has been paramount everywhere. These physicians work with the permanent staff on board the *Hope*, which includes five physicians, thirty-six nurses, and twenty-five auxiliary medical personnel. The matter of reducing simple hernia alone will keep the medical staff of the S.S. *Hope* occupied night and day when she reaches Africa.

Because many of the countries visited did not have up-to-date medical books or journals, perhaps the *Hope's* greatest contribution has been to leave behind thousands of modern volumes on medicine and surgery—6,000 in Indonesia, 2,000 in South Vietnam, and 10,000 more in Peru and Ecuador. Thirty countries have formally invited the *Hope* to visit them in order to improve their own medical techniques and skills. Practical dietary aids have been fundamental. Every day, the "Iron Cow" on the S.S. *Hope* turns out hundreds of half-pints of milk which are distributed to local



children. This ancillary program helps combat malnutrition and tuberculosis. The rate of milk distribution is an astonishing 3,000 quarts per week.

Nor have the *Hope's* personnel and administration suffered from lack of volunteers. Over 3,000 applications have been received from doctors all around the United States, usually on a voluntary rotating basis. Nurses and paramedical personnel have been equally eager to join what is perhaps the most exciting voluntary medical assistance program in the history of mankind. *Hope* has, incidentally, the formal endorsement of both the American Medical Association and the American Dental Association. While it is a voluntary project with headquarters in Washington, D.C., it does receive some financial assistance from the United States Government for the operation of the ship itself.

To have treated 100,000 human beings, immunized half a million more who would otherwise have never known good health, and trained 2,750 doctors, nurses, and medical technicians in fewer than four years is an achievement as astonishing as it is heartwarming. Communism continues to gain footholds wherever disease and poverty remain; and here is a practical antidote, a program carried on in democratic fashion to the credit of the cause of the free world. In one port of call, Salaverry, Peru, the first weeks of *Hope's* visit were filled with suspicion and downright antagonism. When, ten months later, the good ship *Hope* pulled reluctantly out of the littered harbor, 40,000 Peruvians lined every foot of shoreline and the water was massed with flowers cast by a grateful and tearful populace, some of whom had walked barefoot for thirty miles to thank their Yankee benefactors.

The American system is, fundamentally, the voluntary system whenever and wherever it will work. Nothing is more sophisticated and nothing more difficult to operate smoothly than this method, which requires a restraint and a political ethic not always found in lands accustomed to authoritarian ways. But when the voluntary system works, it seems to set up a contagion of its own. The S.S. *Hope* derives from the People to People program, and the very facts that the white ship of mercy isn't politically sponsored, isn't wholly tax-supported, isn't part of a propaganda routine have helped make the *Hope* venture successful. Since the voluntary way is precisely that, however, it requires the help of sensible, responsible people; some \$5,000,000 is the *Hope's* immediate goal. It will get it, too, for the American people know a good thing when they see one, and the logic and patent success of the *Hope's* first four years are overwhelmingly persuasive. —R.L.T.