

## Transcript of a letter from George Washington to Doctor William Shippen, Jr

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**[Transcript of a letter from George Washington to Doctor William Shippen, Jr. (a draft in the handwriting of Washington's aid, Robert Hanson) In George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General Correspondence. 1697-1777.]**

[1777 Jan. 6]

Head Qutr: Morristown Feby 6th 1777

Dear Sir:

Finding the small pox to be spreading much and fearing that no precaution can prevent it from running thro' the whole of our Army, I have determined that the Troops shall be inoculated. This Expedient may be attended with some inconveniences and some disadvantages, but yet I trust, in its consequences will have the most happy effects. Necessity not only authorizes but seems to require the measure, for should the disorder infect the Army, in the natural way, and rage with its usual virulence, we should have more to dread from it, than from the Sword of the Enemy. Under these circumstances, I have directed Doctr. Bond to prepare immediately for inoculating in this Quarter, keeping the matter as secret as possible, and request that you will without delay inoculate all the Continental Troops that are in Philadelphia and those that shall come in as fast as they arrive. You will spare no pains to carry them thro' the disorder with the utmost expedition, and to have them cleansed from the infection when recovered, that they may proceed to Camp with as little injury as possible, to the Country thro' which they pass. If the business is immediately begun and favoured with the common success, I would fain hope they will be soon fit for duty, and that in a short space of time we shall have an Army not subject to this the greatest of all calamities that can befall us, when taken in the natural way.

To

Dr. Shippen

Jany 6, 1777

Note: The above transcript of the letter has been drawn from the transcript text provided in online The Papers of George Washington, 1748-1799" site at <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=WasFi06.xml&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=349&division=div1> (accessed 9/2012).