

GEORGE C. STEVENSON, M. D.

NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY

Claremont Medical Building
Suite F, P. O. Box 1296
REDDING, CALIFORNIA, 96001

Phone: Area Code 916
243-7531

August 30, 1967

Eugene Stead, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Duke University
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Dear Dr. Stead,

I am writing to you with respect to three points:

- 1) I would like to again express my gratitude to you for traveling to Redding for purposes of aiding the Paramedical Technician endeavor. I cannot help but feel that someday through a series of cases such as this, that the lay public and the judiciary system which they basically control, in concert with good medical ethics, will afford these men a place in the care of ill patients.
- 2) I enclose just some interesting letters which I have received from time to time with respect to a real interest in this area.
- 3) Mr. Roger Whittaker has continued to exhibit only the highest qualities of professional and moral interest and attitude toward the care of patients. I understand that the inception of his training in your program is to start in the next few weeks and I would continue to give him my unqualified endorsement.

Sincerely,


George C. Stevenson, M.D.

GCS:jb
encls.

8/28/67

HOWARD HASSARD
GEORGE AARON SMITH
ALAN L. BONNINGTON
JOSEPH S. ROGERS
ROBERT D. HUBER
SALVATORE BOSSIO

DAVID E. WILLETT
JOHN I. JEFSEN
JAMES F. ERNST

HARTLEY F. PEART
(1901-1954)
GUS L. GARATY
(1910-1956)

PEART, HASSARD, SMITH & BONNINGTON
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
3500 WELLS FARGO BUILDING
44 MONTGOMERY STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94104
TELEPHONE (415) 982-8885

25 August 1967

Mr. Jerrald K. Pickering
Attorney at Law
1721 Court Street
Redding, California

Re: George C. Stevenson, M. D.

Dear Mr. Pickering:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 17 August 1967 regarding Dr. George C. Stevenson and his legal problems.

I did not know that you represented Dr. Stevenson until I received your letter. I had been under the impression that Dr. Stevenson was represented by the office of Melvin Belli.

I am somewhat familiar with Dr. Stevenson's litigation, for several reasons. First of all, I have over a period of time received from Dr. Stevenson considerable correspondence on the subject. Secondly, your former partner, Senator Fred Marler, discussed the subject with Sacramento representatives of the California Medical Association and me some months ago.

At that time Senator Marler was tentatively thinking of legislation in the paramedical field. We pointed out to him that the California Medical Association, acting jointly with a number of other organizations, both public and private, was in the process of creating a state-wide Health Manpower Council, and that one of the major objectives of the Manpower Council would be to study in depth the over-all manpower requirements in the health field. Obviously, such a study would incorporate the area of technical assistants to the practicing physician.

I urged that before specific legislation is considered the Health Manpower Council be given an opportunity to undertake and plead to broad studies. I do not intend to put words into Senator Marler's mouth, but it is my impression that he concurred in this over-all approach.

Mr. Jerrald K. Pickering
25 August 1967
Page Two

I am pleased to note that you also have come to the conclusion that legislating specific licenses would be a mistake.

Since our discussion with Senator Marler, the Health Manpower Council has become a reality. Accordingly, I will forward your letter and a copy of this letter to the California Medical Association for re-transmittal to the Health Manpower Council.

Sincerely,

Howard Howard

April 10, 1967

Porter M. Bailes, M.D.
932 Hospital Drive
Tyler, Texas

Dear Dr. Bailes,

Thank you very much for your cordial letter of April 7th with its comments with respect to your next meeting of Surgical Assistants.

I will enclose with this letter the Medical World News delineation and description of the surgical assistance situation in northern California with respect to our own problem. The action was brought against us primarily by the District Attorney of the local county in response to a special investigator of the Professional and Vocational Standards Division of the State of California. This investigator was asked to look into the matter as a result of a complaint that had been sent to the State Board of Medical Examiners by a plastic surgeon who moved to the community just two months prior, after twenty years service in the Army; saying my utilization of such paramedical personnel prompted his letter.

However, there are many other nuances and certainly I feel, as do many people who traveled to California for this trial including Dr. Eugene Stead of Duke University, that the Physician Assistant is going to be an established and accredited position for a man to spend his life's vocation in the future.

The hospital's position in this dispute I will have outlined by the Administrator of Memorial Hospital, Mr. Robert R. Roberts.

If you would desire to talk over this problem personally I would be happy to discuss the situation with you. In addition, if any further information is desired or if you would like me

C
O
P
Y

to make any short, documentary, comment type of dissertation
at your meeting I should be most pleased to do so.

Again, I thank you for your cordial comments, and am

Very sincerely yours,

George C. Stevenson, M.D.

GCS:jb
encls.

C
O
P
Y

52 West Hudson Avenue
Englewood, New Jersey
28 December 1966

George C. Stevenson, M.D.
Redding, California


Dear Dr. Stevenson:

I was flabbergasted to read TIME's account of the recent miscarriage of justice against you. You and Mr. Whittaker have my respect and sympathy... though I know that doesn't help you very much. TIME may not print my letter to the Editor, so I'll quote it here-- it may be good for your blood pressure.

Sir: The members of the Redding, California jury who found Dr. George Stevenson's skilled surgical assistant guilty of practicing medicine without a license should all have their heads examined: preferably under general anesthesia, by a competent neurosurgeon encumbered by an untrained but duly licensed assistant.

I'm only a resident, and so am not in a position to help you finance an appeal, if you plan one. Besides bringing the case to the attention of some fellow residents and the Attendings and writing the AMA, is there anything I can do to help? This precedent must be reversed!

Yours truly,


Gerald A. Metz M.D.
Resident in Ophthalmology

PORTER M. BAILES, JR., M. D., F.A.C.S.
932 HOSPITAL DRIVE
TYLER, TEXAS

DIPLOMATE
AMERICAN BOARD OF SURGERY

APRIL 7, 1967

GEORGE C. STEVENSON, M. D.
P.O. Box 1296
REDDING, CALIFORNIA

DEAR DR. STEVENSON:

WHEN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS LAST YEAR I DECIDED TO GIVE THE USUAL PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS AT OUR NEXT MEETING ON "SURGICAL ASSISTANTS". IN PLANNING THIS I CAME ACROSS THE ARTICLE IN TIME MAGAZINE, DATED DECEMBER 30, 1966, ON THE DIFFICULTIES YOU HAD IN THIS REGARD. MY SENTIMENTS ARE EXACTLY THE SAME AS YOURS IN THAT SKILLED NON-PROFESSIONAL PERSONS I THINK GIVE A GREAT SOURCE OF SURGICAL ASSISTANCE WITH THE DOCTOR SHORTAGE. I WONDER IF YOU WOULD HAVE TIME TO WRITE ME A NOTE AND PARTICULARLY EXPLAIN WHO BROUGHT ACTION AGAINST YOU AS THIS WAS NEVER EXPLAINED IN THE ARTICLE. I WOULD ALSO LIKE VERY MUCH TO KNOW WHAT THE HOSPITALS POSITION WAS IN THIS DISPUTE.

WITH MANY THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR THIS COURTESY, I AM

YOURS SINCERELY,



PORTER M. BAILES, JR. M.D.

PMB-rs

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

January 31, 1967

Geprge C. Stevenson, M.D.
Neurological Surgery
Claremont Medical Building
Suite F
Post Office Box 1296
Redding, California 96001

Dear Mr. Stevenson:

I received your kind letter dated January 24, 1967. I had written to Mr. Loren Johnson of Redding and still hope that he is planning to fill my order for a copy of the Proceedings in the recent trial where Mr. Whittaker and you had been convicted on one count of practicing medicine without a license. Our basic interest in the study which we are carrying out does involve the basic theorem of can a physician interpose a third hand or extra set of hands between himself and the patient at times when he is actually the one treating and caring for a patient.

I would be very grateful if I could receive the documentation and the assistive thoughts, comments and legislative efforts that came to you from the Surgeon General's Office in Washington, the AMA, and from other sources. This would be very helpful to us in our endeavor and I cannot tell you how much I would appreciate receiving it. If there would be any charge for reproduction costs of these materials, please let me know.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward H. Forgetson".

Edward H. Forgetson, M.D., LL.M.
Assoc. Professor and Chairman of
Division of Public Health Administration

EHF:rv

January 24, 1967

Edward H. Forgotson, M.D.
Public Health Administration
School of Public Health
University of California at Los Angeles
1363 Allenford Avenue
Los Angeles, California

Dear Dr. Forgotson,

I understand from the court reporter, Mr. Loren Johnson of Redding, California, that you are interested in the proceedings of the recent trial where a paramedical assistant, i.e. a Navy Corpsman in my employe, was convicted on one of three counts of practicing medicine without a license.

It is interesting that the three cases in point were all declared as EV on the anesthesia chart by a physician other than myself and were all quite frank emergencies. It is my understanding of the appeal of the one count on which we were convicted (two were found not guilty) is based on the fact that this case was as much an emergency as the other two. Emergency conditions apparently waive licensure requirements.

However, the basic theorem of 'can a physician interpose a third hand, or extra set of hands between he and the patient at times, while he is actually the one treating and caring for a patient' and not the medical technician, is the point in fact. Considerable amounts of assistive thoughts, comments and legislative efforts in other states have come to us, both from the Surgeon General's office in Washington, D.C., as well as the AMA, etc. and other sources. If you are compiling a record of any and all of this type of legal documentary evidence or information, I should be most happy to pass this on to you.

Very sincerely yours,

George C. Stevenson, M.D.

GCS:jb

January 16, 1967

Walter C. MacKenzie, M.D., President
American College of Surgeons
55 East Erie Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

C
O
P
Y
Dear Doctor MacKenzie:

The recent report in Time of a suit against a neurosurgeon in Oregon requires considerable thought. The article states that Dr. Stevenson did alone operations "requiring" two neurosurgeons and raises questions concerning his use of a surgical technician as an assistant. Having spent some ten post-graduate years in "academic" hospitals, I have rarely seen two neurosurgeons scrub on the same case. In fact, often the assistant is a very untrained medical student, intern or rotating surgical resident. I have long felt that for the majority of neurosurgical cases, only a competent nurse is needed as assistant, and she can usually outperform any but an accomplished resident in such a task. Many surgeons have employed nurse and surgical technician assistants, and as long as the surgeon is competent and exercises good judgment in what he allows his assistant to do, this seems preferable.

As a recent transfer to an excellent clinic situation, I find that my operating time is only two-thirds or less what it was at University Hospitals, where my assistants were residents or interns of varying training. Thus I think it is incumbent upon authoritative societies to state publicly that surgery is the responsibility of the surgeon and that any competent assistant is acceptable. I do not intend forcing accomplished surgeons to perform menial assistance chores and I certainly do not intend doing this for others. Even though I have house officers available at my request, I feel their help is necessary only on more complicated cases. Since no one has defended the use of nurse and technician assistants, I feel that someone should.

Sincerely yours,

C. Norman Shealy, M.D.

CNS/jhf

cc: George C. Stevenson, M.D.