



Sir: It is with great enthusiasm and as a Coalition of Hope (COH) Board member that I write this letter of support for the COH Foundation to acquire and repurpose a de-commissioned U.S. Naval vessel. The purpose of this effort would be to provide humanitarian assistance for early response disaster relief efforts, and as a floating teaching hospital, both at home and worldwide.

United States Naval hospital ships have played important and pivotal rolls in disaster response and relief efforts since the early days of our republic. During the 1918 influenza pandemic the USS Comfort and the USS Mercy provided lifesaving care and treatment to influenza patients. A logical extension of these efforts is to create a civilian counterpart.

We are in the midst of a worsening COVID-19 pandemic that requires our best and unified efforts to defeat this virus. In addition, we are at the cusp of developing and deploying critical vaccine countermeasures to combat this virus. These immune providing lifesaving vaccines will require very specific cold storage, transport and delivery platforms in order to maintain its viability and effectiveness. I can conceive of no better delivery system than a fully equipped, mobile floating platform, a Coalition of Hope Hospital ship purposed, not only to deliver, administer and distribute this vaccine via US ports, but also to provide overflow relief to stressed hospitals and responders by accepting and treating infected patients.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven J. Phillips".

Steven J. Phillips, MD*
NIH staff scientist (retired)
(LTC retired)

* Brief Bio

Steven J. Phillips, MD (LTC retired) is Board certified in both General and Thoracic Surgery. Dr. Phillips, an NIH staff scientist, served as the Deputy Director for Research and Education (1999-2002) and Associate Director for the Division of Specialized Information Services, (SIS,2007-15), National Library of Medicine (NLM), NIH, DHHS. He led the effort to establish a Disaster Information Management Research Center at the NLM. This Center, totally devoted to disaster informatics, was the first of its kind in the world. Dr. Phillips was a member of the Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine's Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Catastrophic Events. He directed the research efforts of the Bethesda Hospital Emergency Partnership Program (BHEPP), a Congressionally funded program to respond to a National Capitol Disaster, and to create a hospital surge model for the U.S. He was a member of the Congressionally mandated Department of Defense Task Force on the Care, Management, and Transition of Recovering Wounded, Ill, and Injured Members of the Armed Forces, and a member of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The WALL) Reception Center Board.