

# Nixon's Doctor Reports Lung Healing

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—The area of former President Richard M. Nixon's right lung that was damaged by a blood clot that broke off from a vein in his phlebitis-damaged left leg has partly healed and no new blood clots have lodged in either lung in the past week, Mr. Nixon's doctor said here today.

Dr. John C. Lungren, Mr. Nixon's personal physician, said in a medical bulletin that the healing was detected by a second ventilation-perfusion lung scan test done yesterday at the Memorial Hospital Medical Center of Long Beach.

Dr. Lungren's bulletin said:

"President Nixon's latest lung scan, completed on Monday, Sept. 30, confirmed the following:

- "1. Evidence of partial resolution [return toward normal] of the clot in the right lung.
- "2. No evidence of any additional fresh emboli in the lungs.
- "3. Analysis of the data from the initial and latest lung scans indicate that the pulmonary embolus probably occurred about two weeks before his hospitalization when he was seen in Palm Springs for his original nontraumatic phlebitis."

#### 'Small Defect Noted'

Mr. Nixon's first lung scan was done a week ago. Dr. Lungren said it "showed one small definite defect of perfusion [blood flow] in the right lung."

"The extent of the perfusion defect was approximately 5 per cent of the total lung tissue," he said. "Number 2, airway patency scan or ventilation

scan, performed on Tuesday, Sept. 24, showed normal or near-normal ventilation of the areas of the lung showing the perfusion defect.

"Number three, the combination of the perfusion defect in the lung which is well ventilated is strong evidence that the perfusion defect is due to an embolus. This approaches 100 per cent of certainty that the perfusion defect is due to an embolus."

Dr. Lungren was asked at a news conference yesterday if a copy of the lung scans could be made available to the press. He responded, "I don't believe so. I think that's a question of the patient's record and I don't believe—I just wouldn't give it to you."

Dr. Lungren has treated Mr. Nixon and his family for more than 20 years. He has repeatedly stressed that his bulletins and the gist of his remarks were approved by Mr. Nixon in accordance with the principles of the confidentiality of the doctor-patient relationship.

#### The Medical Complications

The medical complication of Mr. Nixon's phlebitis—the blood clot and pulmonary infarct (damaged area in the lung)—possibly resulted from Mr. Nixon's refusal to follow Dr. Lungren's advice.

When Dr. Lungren said he first examined Mr. Nixon for the flare-up of his phlebitis condition last month, the former President refused hospitalization. Dr. Lungren added:

"I refused to give him anticoagulation therapy, to start him on it, because I thought it was too dangerous [to do at home, outside a hospital]. I did something that might be ques-

tioned but I think under the circumstances it turned out all right. I gave him an anti-inflammatory drug at that time. Now the danger of that is sometimes blocking out the very appearance of a pulmonary infarct. But fortunately the one that did happen was small."

Dr. Lungren said that a Doppler ultrasound test had been done to detect blood clots in Mr. Nixon's legs. The result, Dr. Lungren said, "gave us rather complete assurance that there were no clots in the thigh area at this time." Dr. Lungren did not comment on the possibility of clots in the veins in

the calves of Mr. Nixon's legs.

Accordingly, Dr. Lungren said he planned to put off a special X-ray test called a venogram because of the risk that Mr. Nixon might develop an allergic reaction to the chemical injected into the vein and the risk of aggravating the phlebitis.

"Relying on clinical judgment, I feel at this time it's not the test to use but that it may be some time in the future."

Then, explaining his medically conservative attitude towards diagnostic tests, Dr. Lungren said: "You know you can kill a patient with tears. It's been done."