John R. Seffrin, PhD, on the Death of C. Everett Koop

John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., American Cancer Society chief executive officer, responded to the news of the passing of former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.

"Dr. Koop was a dear friend and a giant in public health. He was a bold leader, courageous and willing to say what needed to be said. He will be missed.

"After he was selected by President Reagan to be Surgeon General, many in public health had doubts. But he took them by surprise. Dr. Koop took what had been a very quiet post, with the notable exception of Luther Terry, and began to speak out on things like AIDS and secondhand smoke from tobacco. It was clear he would not let his personal beliefs compromise his consistent goal to call for what was best for the public health.

"Many will remember Dr. Koop for having a flair for knowing what the new media wanted, or for dressing the part by wearing his admiral's uniform. He was a colorful man, but his impact was quite real. He along with Luther Terry had a greater impact of any other Surgeon General that preceded them."

"I last saw Chick when I spoke at his 95th birthday party last year. Although in a wheelchair and not talking, as I recounted his accomplishments he smiled at me and winked. It was a special moment, and the way I will always remember him."