

Jeff Susman, MD  
Editor-in-Chief



# Still optimistic after all these years

Recently, I was delighted to receive a run of this journal's earliest issues (courtesy of Jay Siwek, Editor of *American Family Physician*). What fun to see the beginning years of our discipline through the eyes of such intellectual giants as John P. Geyman, Gayle Stephens, and Gene Farley. The tenor of the first issue of *The Journal of Family Practice*, published in May 1974, was guarded optimism, a dash of hubris, and a belief in the future.

Reading about family medicine's early years evokes mixed emotions. On the one hand, I'm struck by our progress: The discipline has been integrated into medical schools, developed a substantial research agenda, and amassed a burgeoning compilation of literature. No longer are we plagued by a paucity of data about common primary care problems, the absence of competency-based training, or the need to debate the advisability of clinical clerkships in the community.

Articles on computers in family practice (consider the \$800,000 to \$14 million investment), the problem-oriented medical encounter, and the diagnostic index E-book serve as quaint reminders of an existence before the iPod touch and comprehensive EHRs. All in all, our discipline has grown robustly.

## The greatest disappointment is the inequity of our health care system.

On the other hand, many aspirations remain unmet. The integration of the family, psychosocial, and behavioral health aspects of family practice is still just a promise. We struggle to develop patient-centered medical homes that truly integrate mental health, despite overwhelming evidence of their effectiveness. Community medicine and public health continue to be weak stepchildren. The schism between public health and medicine remains largely ignored. And the concept of a truly multidisciplinary team continues to be just that—a theory with limited implementation.

Even many of our basic tenets of continuity and comprehensive care are regularly assailed, amid the spread of minute clinics and subspecialism. I've already seen cardiologists and surgeons who claim to be developing patient-centered medical homes—shades of Clinton-era health care reform. Perhaps the greatest disappointment, though, is the inequity of our health care system, which persists despite our best efforts.

I'd like to end—as I started—with guarded optimism. Disappointments notwithstanding, the words, "Let us with enthusiastic vigor develop family medicine and other programs that relate to societal needs"<sup>1</sup> ring as clear and true today as they did 36 years ago.

*Jeff Susman, MD*  
jfp@famned.uc.edu

### Reference

1. Dennis JL. The future of family practice in our medical schools. *J Fam Pract*. 1974;1:6-8.

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

JEFFREY L. SUSMAN, MD  
University of Cincinnati

### ASSOCIATE EDITORS

BERNARD EWIGMAN, MD, MSPH  
University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine

JOHN HICKNER, MD, MSc  
Cleveland Clinic Medicine Institute

JAMES STEVERMER, MD, MSPH  
University of Missouri, Columbia (*Clinical Inquiries*)

RICHARD P. USATINE, MD  
University of Texas Health Sciences Center  
at San Antonio (*Photo Rounds*)

### ASSISTANT EDITORS

BURT BANKS, MD  
East Tennessee State University, Bristol

DOUG CAMPOS-OUTCALT, MD, MPA  
University of Arizona, Phoenix

MARK R. ELLIS, MD, MSPH  
Cox Family Practice Residency, Springfield, Mo

CHARISSA FOTINOS, MD  
University of Washington, Seattle

GARY N. FOX, MD  
St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center, Toledo, Ohio

RICK GUTHMANN, MD  
University of Illinois, Chicago

KEITH B. HOLTEN, MD  
University of Cincinnati

KEVIN Y. KANE, MD, MSPH  
University of Missouri, Columbia

GARY KELSBERG, MD, FAAFP  
University of Washington, Renton

VALERIE J. KING, MD, MPH  
Oregon Health & Science University, Portland

TODD D. MCDIARMID, MD  
Moses Cone Family Medicine Residency,  
Greensboro, NC

JON O. NEHER, MD  
University of Washington, Renton

M. NORMAN OLIVER, MD, MA  
University of Virginia, Charlottesville

AUDREY PAULMAN, MD, MMM  
University of Nebraska College of Medicine,  
Omaha

PAUL M. PAULMAN, MD  
University of Nebraska College of Medicine,  
Omaha

RICK RICER, MD  
University of Cincinnati

FRED TUDIVER, MD  
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City

### EDITORIAL BOARD

FREDERICK CHEN, MD, MPH  
University of Washington, Seattle

LARRY CULPEPPER, MD, MPH  
Boston University Medical Center, Boston, Mass

JOHN W. ELY, MD, MSPH  
University of Iowa College of Medicine, Iowa City

LINDA FRENCH, MD  
University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio

THEODORE G. GANIATS, MD  
University of California—San Diego, La Jolla, Calif

CARYL J. HEATON, DO  
University of Medicine and Dentistry  
of New Jersey, Newark

FRED MISER, MD, MA  
The Ohio State University, Columbus

KEVIN PETERSON, MD, MPH  
University of Minnesota, St. Paul

GOUTHAM RAO, MD, MPA  
University of Pittsburgh

KENDRA SCHWARTZ, MD, MSPH  
Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich

DOUGLAS R. SMUCKER, MD, MPH  
University of Cincinnati

### DIRECT EDITORIAL INFORMATION AND INQUIRIES TO:

EDITORIAL OFFICE  
Health Professions Building  
Department of Family Medicine  
PO Box 670582, Cincinnati OH 45267-0582  
Telephone: (513) 558-4021

PUBLISHING OFFICES  
Quadrant HealthCom, Inc.  
7 Century Drive, Suite 302  
Parsippany, NJ 07054  
Telephone: (973) 206-3434  
Fax: (973) 206-9378