

John Hickner, MD, MSc  
Editor-in-Chief



## Meet JFP's new editor-in-chief

Last month, Dr. Jeff Susman turned his final editorial into a “Dear John” letter, passing on wisdom acquired during his 9+ years as this journal’s editor-in-chief. He suggested I manage my image. So in this, my first editorial, I’m taking his advice, and letting you know who I am and what’s ahead.

One of 13 children raised in a small town, I spent the first 22 years of my career with Michigan State University College of Human Medicine—practicing, teaching, and doing research in Escanaba, a small town in the Upper Peninsula. It was the heyday of rural medical education, and a heady time for a newly minted family doc. Visitors from as far afield as China and South Africa came to see how we trained competent physicians in this rural setting.

How did a small-town family doc become editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Family Practice*? It turns out that the journal has a tradition of small-town family physicians as editors, including Mark Ebell (2000-2002), Jeff Susman (2003-2012), and now me. Perhaps the grounding in daily, small-town practice contributed to my sense of what FPs need to know to be competent and compassionate practitioners. I’ve also served as JFP’s associate editor for original research for more than 10 years and as an editor of the monthly PURLs column.

Today, I’m chairman of family medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, a post I’ve held since 2009. Patient care is still the most rewarding part of my work, although clinical research occupies about half of my time.

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I was sidetracked into research early on, my interest piqued by tympanostomy tubes. After my first 2 children had those little grommets inserted, I wanted to know what evidence supported their use—and was taken aback to find not a single randomized trial demonstrating the benefit of ear tubes over watchful wait-

ing. Sound familiar? Consider PSA screening, electronic fetal monitoring, and antibiotics for acute respiratory infections, to name a few.

In 1980, I established a practice-based research network in Michigan to study the common issues we confront as family physicians, and in 2000 I became the first director of the American Academy of Family Physicians’ National Research Network. There are now 136 primary care practice-based research networks nationwide, answering questions important to us and our patients.

Jeff worked tirelessly to transform JFP into a journal that’s packed with practical, evidence-based information that physicians can immediately apply to patient care. I like the journal’s look, feel, and evidence-based content, and read each issue from cover to cover. Like Jeff, I will select the best available evidence to address important clinical questions. And I hope my editorials will be as entertaining and thought-provoking as his have been.

I also hope to hear from you. Let me know what you like and what you don’t, what you would like to see more of, and what issues you face in your day-to-day practice and wish we would address.

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**EDITORIAL OFFICE**  
Cleveland Clinic  
Mail Code G-10  
9500 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44195  
Telephone: (216) 445-8915

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