

# Board News From The Executive Director

This column is dedicated to bringing news and information about the American Board of Family Practice and its activities as they relate to the specialty and to other specialties in the medical world in both current and historical context.

Most recently, we have established the *first* approved Certificate of Added Qualifications in concert with the American Board of Internal Medicine. This Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) will be in geriatric medicine. Since most of the care of the elderly in the United States is in the hands of family physicians and internists, it was only right and reasonable that the two largest specialty boards in the United States should have joined forces in creating a CAQ in Geriatric Medicine with the requirements for training, certification, and examination all in common.

Having divested ourselves, by mutual agreement, of any self interest, both the American Board of Family Practice and the American Board of Internal Medicine have agreed that this unique partnership in geriatric medicine has as its first and foremost priority that which is considered best for the patient or the public. Matters related to the concern for the medical profession and individual specialties rank secondary. This alliance,

*Deo volente*, also bodes well for health care in the future.

The Certificate of Added Qualifications in Geriatric Medicine as a joint effort with the American Board of Internal Medicine establishes an academic parity that we in family practice hitherto have not known. For those who fear that a general specialty such as family practice might be endangered by fragmentation, we have required that all those Diplomates of the American Board of Family Practice who are successful in achieving the CAQ in Geriatric Medicine must maintain their *primary* certification. Those who restrict their practices to geriatrics alone would find it difficult to be recertified in the general primary specialty; hence, one who loses the primary certification automatically and simultaneously will lose the Certificate of Added Qualifications.

We look forward to a continuing good relation with our colleagues in other specialties. We will keep our Diplomates informed through this column of these matters and other information relevant to this specialty.

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## Definition Certificate of Added Qualifications as Proposed to the American Board of Medical Specialties

The Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) represents acknowledgment and Board recognition (post-certification) of training particularly in an area of added interest.

Such an area of interest may not be limited to or the sole responsibility of an existing primary or conjoint board. The area of interest should be of such a nature that it adds to or complements an existing specialty and is not an area of exclusive professional endeavor in place of that primary specialty or sub-specialty. To maintain the CAQ, one must maintain active certification in the primary specialty or sub-specialty of origin.

The CAQ, properly employed, is not fragmentation but rather it will utilize a special area of interest to be *added* to the primary specialty, *not* to replace one endeavor for another.