The primary purpose of this journal is to publish original papers pertaining to clinical investigations, case reports, review articles pertinent to the specialty of family practice, editorial comments, and book reviews. The articles published are intended to provide new and valuable information for reference by the entire medical community.

The journal also is intended to serve as an important forum for the specialty of family practice, to serve as a source of clinical information, and to serve as a medium for timely information concerning the activities of the American Board of Family Practice.

Consistent with its past history, the American Board of Family Practice (ABFP) took another innovative step when it decided to publish its own journal. To my knowledge, no other American board has independently sponsored its own journal. ABFP felt that there was a need for another quality peer-reviewed publication in our specialty. This decision was based on the observation that the number of Board-certified, residency-trained family physicians will continue to increase at a steady rate. Further, the Board sensed that an increasing number of colleagues will be actively engaged in scholarly investigations, and they will have need of peer-reviewed specialty journals in which to publish.

The most important characteristic of the journal, demanded by the Board, is that it must maintain high-quality standards. In order to achieve this, there exists an outstanding Editorial Board and an active and effective Advisory Board. In addition, the reviewers represent a very impressive cadre of some of the most highly respected clinicians in the world.

This journal, along with other similar journals, bears the responsibility to establish and maintain the quality of investigation and publication for the specialty. Journals can, by encouraging or discouraging investigators, impact heavily on the direction and quality of research in the discipline. Accumulated investigation shapes the discipline and defines its content over time.

The journals within a medical discipline also reflect the state of the art for that discipline to other disciplines as well as to society in general. Journals reflect the value systems within the discipline represented. It is the responsibility of journals to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the discipline and to serve as a reliable communication device among professionals.

For the discipline of family medicine, it is especially important at this time to make important contributions to medical knowledge. The discipline has long been largely dependent for new information upon investigators in other disciplines. If our discipline is to survive and manifest its destiny in society, it must make important contributions. The journals that represent the discipline must effectively communicate those contributions to its own disciples as well as to the professions and society in general.

The editorial staff of this journal is sensitive to these responsibilities and accepts them soberly. The quality of performance remains to be judged. Our intent is to encourage quality investigations and professional writing. Our criticisms of manuscripts are sincerely intended to be constructive. It is inevitable that more manuscripts will be rejected than accepted. It is also recognized that the editors are not flawless in their judgments of quality and that some criticisms of manuscripts may be misinterpreted as being personal in nature. This also is probably inevitable but must be minimized.

Finally, we feel very fortunate to be able to utilize the vast experience and time-proven excellence of the publisher. The Massachusetts Medical Society has achieved levels of quality in medical publishing that are virtually unmatched in the world. The staff members of the publisher are truly professional in every sense. We sincerely hope this is the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship.

Paul R. Young, M.D.
Galveston, TX
Information for Readers

The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice
2228 Young Drive
Lexington, KY 40505

Official Publication of
The American Board of Family Practice
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American Board of Family Practice
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Lexington, KY 40505
Tel: (606) 269-5626
FAX: (606) 266-9699

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INDEXING AND MICROFORM
The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice is indexed in Index Medicus and is available in microform from University Microfilms International.
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Writing about Writing, Part II
With this issue we are pleased to begin our second year of publishing The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice.

The relationship between the Board and Medical Publishing Group of the Massachusetts Medical Society originated three years ago when we were asked by Dr. Nicholas Pisacano to assist the Board in producing a new journal dedicated to publishing original clinical papers and case reports. He indicated that the Board was determined to create a new forum for articles and issues related to family practice, and in so doing, make positive impact on the direction and quality of research in the specialty.

We were immediately impressed with the idea because we felt the Board's goals closely paralleled our own expectations for each of the periodicals we publish. This meant producing a high-quality publication that would provide valuable, accurate, and timely information to family physicians so they, in turn, could deliver quality medical care to their patients.

Through the efforts of Dr. Nicholas Pisacano, Dr. Paul Young, and Dr. Gayle Stephens, The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice has already exceeded expectations. After only one year of publication the journal has been accepted by the major abstracting and indexing services. This means the quality of the editorial content meets the standards of independent parties and assures the inclusion of The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice articles in medical bibliographic literature.

We wish to congratulate the Editors and the Editorial Board on this accomplishment and on a successful first year of publication. A nice synergy has developed between our two organizations and we look forward to many more years of creative collaboration.

Ann Reinke Strong
Deputy Executive Director
Medical Publishing Group