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New Horizons For *JABFP*

This issue of *JABFP* marks the start of its fourth year of publishing and its first issue as a bimonthly publication. The American Board of Family Practice has made the commitment to increase the *Journal*'s frequency to bimonthly at this time and to monthly as the need develops. This issue also marks the start of my role as Editor of *JABFP*. In my own transition from previous editorial activity to my present role, I have been very much impressed with the extent of support and understanding by the leadership of the American Board of Family Practice for this kind of journal as a forum for publication of original work in the field.

Journals in many fields are complex organisms, subject to many pressures for their viability and survival in competing markets. It is not uncommon for there to be some tension between the goals and interests of the publisher-owner of a journal and its editorial philosophy and policies. In this instance, it is a privilege to become involved with this *Journal* under circumstances of strong organizational backing and complete congruency of editorial goals and purpose between the editorial staff, sponsoring organization, and publisher. High standards of quality and commitment to the literature of record have already been established between the American Board of Family Practice and the Publishing Division of the Massachusetts Medical Society under the leadership of the founding editor, Dr. Paul Young. My task will be to build on this solid foundation as *JABFP* expands into its next phase of development.

The increasing frequency of *JABFP* will make it more accessible to the readership and provide new opportunities for publication of original work in the field. The original editorial goals and directions, as charted through the vision of Drs. Pisacano, Young, Stephens, Brucker, and others, will be continued. Undoubtedly, new editorial features will be added as the need arises, but the overall goal will be to continue to publish a broad spectrum of papers relevant to family practice, both as a clinical specialty and as the foundation of primary care in the nation's evolving health care system.

In a generalist specialty like family practice, it is difficult to categorize neatly all of the kinds of papers that will be useful to the field and of interest to the readership. Research advances relevant to the field, for example, may involve studies at various levels, ranging from the individual patient to the family, to the community, and to the health care system. Research studies may be oriented to clinical outcomes, health services, clinical epidemiology, clinical decision making, biopsychosocial factors, and other perspectives. The *Journal* will provide an active forum for publication of a broad range of scholarly work. High priority will be given to reports of clinical studies and experiences in family practice settings and to papers that advance family medicine as an academic discipline. The *Journal* will welcome a spectrum of contributions, including original articles, clinical reviews, case reports, editorial commentaries, correspondence, book reviews, and related scholarly articles relevant to family medicine and the family physician. As the field develops and its literature base matures, we can anticipate that reported studies

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of the clinical experience of family physicians will help to establish new standards for primary care, in many cases replacing expectations of primary care formerly established by other specialties based on experience with nonprimary care populations.

As *JABFP* expands its frequency and capacity, the peer-review process will be expanded to include additional reviewers, together with the active involvement of others on the editorial staff. Four-year terms have been established for members of the editorial board, and Drs. Howard Brody and Eric Wall also join this group this month. The dynamic ongoing process of peer review is central to the quality and life of *JABFP*. Past, present, and future efforts of all those involved in this process are gratefully acknowledged. Their efforts, often unrecognized, are the lifeblood of this kind of journal.

As the only journal in the field explicitly targeted to the needs of board-certified family physicians, its future quality and value are dependent on the vigor of interactive efforts to advance family practice as a clinical specialty. To Diplomates of the American Board of Family Practice, I would say that this is your journal. As Editor, I welcome your active readership, suggestions, and involvement toward making *JABFP* the leading monthly journal in the field, with interest and value to all involved in family medicine, both in this country and abroad.

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