

Family Medicine Updates



From the Society of Teachers
of Family Medicine

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NEW EDITORIAL LEADERSHIP FOR FAMILY MEDICINE

On March 1, 2010, I became the 4th editor in the 31-year history of the journal *Family Medicine*. Since then, I have been asked dozens of times to describe what changes are in store for the journal. Thus far our focus has not been on what to change but on clarifying our mission for the future. The Society of Teachers of Family Medicine publishes *Family Medicine*, so the journal has always focused on publishing articles related to educational research and curricular innovation. These are topics of primary interest to teachers working in residency programs and medical school departments and such teachers make up a majority of our journal's readers. Over the years, *Family Medicine* has become a major voice for innovation in medical education. Our training programs have never been in greater need of well-tested new ideas than they are today. We cannot expect our graduates to deliver evidence-based primary care by teaching them in programs that are fundamentally entrenched in outdated or unproven teaching methods. So it remains a goal of the journal to foster such innovation by publishing papers about educational research. This has been our focus for over 30 years, but does it really define our mission? What is the overriding purpose for *Family Medicine*?

Academic family medicine is, of course, much more than just teaching. Faculty members engage in clinical practice, conduct clinical research, and study innovations in health policy. So the scope of *Family Medicine* needs to be as broad and comprehensive as the daily work of its readers. As 20th century family medicine is transformed into a new model of primary care based on the patient-centered medical home, the need has never been greater for our clinical, educational, and policy work to be tied together in the research we conduct and the papers we write. All of the journals in our discipline must work together to build these interconnections because important new discoveries are likely to take place at the interface between clinical practice, clinical teaching, and health policy. In

addition to medical school and residency educational research, *Family Medicine* will publish more papers about primary care workforce policy, interdisciplinary clinical and educational models, international issues in medical education, and community-based education. We will also continue to publish papers about new strategies to develop and retain the faculty workforce needed for a reformed health care system. Thus, the mission of *Family Medicine* is to facilitate communication among scholars, educators, and policy leaders interested in preparing the best possible workforce to care for communities of people.

Fortunately, our discipline is served by a family of journals that compliment one another. A new model of clinical care cannot evolve without a new model of clinician and this new clinician will not arise from old models of medical school and residency education. Just as research in our field requires a diversity of methods, a new model of primary care requires clinical, educational, and policy innovation. So I hope that regular readers of the *Annals of Family Medicine* will also be regular readers of *Family Medicine* and vice versa. Over the next few months, *Family Medicine* will begin to change in ways designed to enhance innovation at the interface between clinical practices, teaching programs, and research enterprises. In doing so, we will work to support and compliment the other journals in family medicine, both in America and internationally. There is much to be done and much is at stake.

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THE CHALLENGE TO BUILD RESEARCH CAPACITY IN FAMILY MEDICINE: IS OUR DISCIPLINE READY?

Research in family medicine is critical to the success of our discipline. Research enables improved patient outcomes, more informed health policy, more effective education and training strategies, and enhanced academic credibility. As health care reform is implemented in the United States, there is an increased need to investigate