

Welcome to *Effective Clinical Practice*

We are proud to introduce the first issue of *Effective Clinical Practice*, the result of a unique collaboration undertaken 2 years ago. The American College of Physicians–American Society of Internal Medicine (ACP–ASIM) and the Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP), two organizations taking leadership roles in adapting to our chaotic health care environment, sought and found common ground: to serve and support members and a broad base of practicing physicians in their struggle to improve the health and quality of life of individual patients and populations.

The ACHP, formerly known as The HMO Group, is a national alliance of 26 leading not-for-profit and provider-based health plans. The alliance, founded by public service-oriented leaders of prepaid group practice organizations in 1984, is dedicated to the quality improvement efforts that distinguish and differentiate its members within the managed care industry. Physician leaders within member plans have set the pace of benchmark performance improvement and national leadership in the positive aspects of the managed care revolution. *Effective Clinical Practice* is the successor to the ACHP's own *HMO Practice*, the best elements of which will be represented in the new journal.

The ACP–ASIM is the world's largest medical specialty association, with over 100 000 members. They represent the broad range of internal medicine; membership also includes more than 15 000 students. The mission of the ACP–ASIM is to enhance the quality and effectiveness of health care by fostering excellence and professionalism in the practice of medicine. Through advocacy for universal access to high-quality health care and outstanding contributions to education, evidence-based medicine, and developing practice guidelines, the ACP–ASIM has defined a commitment to the broadest public interest in health care.

Both the ACHP and the ACP–ASIM recognize the new and shifting practice realities being shaped by the market forces of medical economics and the unsettling impact they are having on practicing physicians. The

demand for managed care, with 85% of the privately insured U.S. population now under some level of third-party care management, needs to be met by a strong, quality-improvement-driven physician response. The good or “trustworthy” health plans must see their role in protecting the vital aspects of physician autonomy while facilitating the work of the best providers in managing care. Physicians in turn need to focus attention on reducing unwanted variation in practice styles and eliminating wasteful practices. To meet this challenge, *Effective Clinical Practice* will publish peer-reviewed articles with practical information for busy clinicians, clinician leaders, and other health care managers and professionals.

The first issue focuses on Chronic Disease Management: What Will It Take To Improve Care for Chronic Illness? Edward H. Wagner, MD, MPH, Director of the MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation, Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound (a member plan of ACHP), is Special Editor. The ACP–ASIM and the ACHP thank Dr. Wagner, long-time editor of the *HMO Practice* section Clinical and Outcomes Research, for his work in putting together this special issue. We also extend thanks to Leonard A. Katz, MD, FACP, Editor of *HMO Practice* for 11 years, and Susan Yox, RN, EdD, Executive Editor, for graciously agreeing to serve as interim editors and for providing valuable assistance to ACP–ASIM in publishing operations.

We are also pleased to announce that H. Gilbert Welch, MD, MPH, Senior Research Associate with the Department of Veterans Affairs and Associate Professor of Medicine and Community and Family Medicine at Dartmouth Medical School, has accepted the position of Editor. Please see the note from Dr. Welch on page 1.

It is with excitement and anticipation of mutual benefit through learning that we introduce the first issue of *Effective Clinical Practice*. We expect that it will grow in readership and change in response to your needs as the environment continues to change. We look forward to a long and fruitful dialogue with you, our readers.



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