

Editorials

Introducing *AFP's* Next Editor-in-Chief

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Twenty-three years ago and from 1,000 miles away, I received a request from a student at the University of Miami to take a one-month elective in medical editing. Shortly after I became editor of *American Family Physician (AFP)* in 1988, I offered that elective at the Georgetown University School of Medicine, in addition to a one-year post-residency fellowship in medical editing and faculty development. Until then, no students from other medical schools had expressed interest. The student's name at the time was Sumi Makkar (this was before she met her husband, Matt Sexton, and well before the birth of her two daughters, Saana and Caden). She liked the elective so much that she decided to apply to our family medicine residency program, and she was eagerly accepted. While there, she did a resident elective in medical editing and enjoyed that too.

During Sumi's residency, I encouraged her to stay on and become *AFP's* next medical editing fellow, although it really didn't take much convincing. During her fellowship, Sumi did an outstanding job, and I promptly rewarded her great work by giving her more work to do. It was a mutually gratifying arrangement. When Sumi was finishing her fellowship, I was chair of the family medicine department at Georgetown, and I lost no time in recruiting her to our faculty. She joined a multispecialty group practice run by Georgetown; two years later, she left that practice to become president and founder of Premier Primary Care Physicians in Arlington, Va. She has been repeatedly selected by other physicians as one of the Washington, DC, area's top doctors and has been listed as such in *Washingtonian* magazine.¹

Although in private practice, Sumi maintained two interests that were near and dear to her heart: teaching medical students and medical editing. For the past 18 years, Sumi has taught various courses, including Issues in Adolescent Health Care; P3 (Patients, Populations, & Policy); our third-year clerkship small groups; and a medical writing elective. She regularly supervises medical students in her busy office practice and receives stellar ratings for her mentoring.

In her other life with *AFP*, Sumi started out as an assistant medical editor and rose through the ranks to associate deputy editor. During her tenure, in addition to editing review articles and editorials, Sumi shepherded a host of departments

and features, including Practice Guidelines, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force series, Putting Prevention into Practice, POEMs, Tips from Other Journals, Graham Center Policy One-Pagers, *AFP* Journal Club, Diary from a Week in Practice,² Resident and Student Voice, and CME Quiz. She has been a second editor for Curbside Consultation, Close-Ups: A Patient's Perspective, and Photo Quiz. And, she served as editor for several article series, including Complementary and Alternative Medicine,³ and articles run in collaboration with the American Heart Association and American College of Radiology,⁴ among others. As a member of *AFP's* medical editor executive committee, she has had a hand in almost all major editorial decisions made over the past several years. I have always valued her wise counsel: she blends years of medical editing experience with years of practice experience, always with the needs of our readers in mind. And, she happens to be a delight to work with. In short, Sumi is exceptionally well qualified to take *AFP's* helm and chart a new course into the future.

Which brings me back to Sumi's medical editing fellowship in 2000-2001.⁵ As part of that experience, she visited the American Academy of Family Physicians headquarters in Leawood, Kan., where she met the publications staff and learned firsthand how each issue and all its components are put together. She met with Academy leadership, including Executive Vice President Dr. Doug Henley. During her interview, Doug asked Sumi what her career goals were. Without hesitation, she answered, "I want to be editor of *American Family Physician*." Isn't it nice when dreams come true?

On behalf of the entire editorial team, I am extremely pleased to introduce you to *AFP's* incoming editor-in-chief, Dr. Sumi Makkar Sexton.

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Sumi Makkar Sexton