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HOW “FAMILY PRACTICE” BECAME “FAMILY MEDICINE”

Although the term “family medicine” has been used intermittently over the past forty years or so, the first unified effort to make family medicine the preferred term came about as a result of the Future of Family Medicine (FFM) Project.

FFM was a joint effort of the Family Practice Working Party (WP) and the Academic Family Medicine Organizations (AFMO), which comprised the “family of family medicine,” i.e., the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation (AAFP/F), the American Board of Family Practice (ABFP), the Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM), the Association of Family Practice Residency Directors (AFPRD), the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG), and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM).

A final report of the FFM project was printed in the *Annals of Family Medicine* in its March/April 2004 issue. The report was called “The Future of Family Medicine: A Collaborative Project of the Family Medicine Community.” As part of that report, ten final recommendations were listed. The ninth recommendation, relating to Communications, stated the following:

“A unified communications strategy will be developed to promote an awareness and understanding of the New Model of family medicine and the concept of the personal medical home. As part of this strategy, a new symbol for family physicians will be created, and consistent terminology will be established for the specialty, including use of *family medicine* rather than family practice and *family physician* rather than family practitioner...”

As a result of this change in communications strategy, the AAFP Congress of Delegates officially voted to change the name of the specialty in 2003. Two family medicine organizations changed their names as well. The Association of Family Practice Residency Directors (AFPRD) changed its name to the Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors (AFMRD) in 2004, and the American Board of Family Practice (ABFP) changed its name to the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) in 2005.