

DEVELOPMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE THE AAGP IN 1947

Immediately following the end of World War II ended, there were several groups of general practitioners around the U.S. dealing with the issue of losing hospital privileges. Many of these groups decided to set up formal organizations to fight the loss of privileges and to create a sense of unity among GPs. As the AAGP/AAFP grew, many individuals and groups tried to claim that general/family practice started in their living room, hospital, state, or region.

Documents do support the existence of several of these groups before the AAGP was founded, but so many of them were developing at the same time that it is difficult to say which one was first. There is also the problem of determining which organizations really intended to represent GPs across the country, rather than in a particular area.

Efforts to start organizations for general practice took the following forms:

1. Dr. Stanley Truman claims in *The History of the Founding of the American Academy of General Practice* that there was talk of forming an organization for general practitioners in 1934, when he began practicing.
2. In December 1940, the magazine *Medical Economics* recommended "the formation of a new and entirely independent organization within American medicine. This body...would be dedicated exclusively to general practice..."
3. June 1941: First request for Section on General Practice at AMA (Not Approved)
4. The Committee of General Practitioners is formed in Cincinnati's Jewish Hospital in August 1945.
5. The General Practitioners Association of Alameda County, California, had its first meeting in December 1945 and was incorporated in May 1946.
6. May 1946: A Society of General Physicians is established to represent GPs in Cincinnati hospitals.
7. July 3, 1946: The first meeting of the newly-organized Section on General Practice of the AMA (where plans were made to form the AAGP)

8. An organization called the American College of Physicians and Surgeons was formed by GPs in Illinois and Minnesota in 1946 and had chapters in those states plus Wisconsin and Indiana when the AAGP was founded. In fact, there was a struggle to determine whether the AAGP would fold into the ACPS or vice versa. Obviously, the AAGP prevailed.

9. June 10, 1947: The founding meeting of the AAGP

It is certain that that there were other regional organizations for general practitioners which are unknown to us today but which played a part in the establishment of general practice as a movement and ultimately as a formal organization. This is why it is difficult to support the view that any one organization was the first or should gain credit for spawning others.