



A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS FOUNDATION

The AAFP Foundation was founded in 1958 by the American Academy of General Practice (now known as the American Academy of Family Physicians) when it endorsed a proposal to establish “an educational and research foundation for the support of research in medical and economic aspects of general practice.” Since the AAGP’s founding in 1947, the need for a charitable institution that could administer and accept funds dedicated to general practice had become more and more apparent, and on November 18, 1958, the AAGP Foundation was issued a charter by the State of Missouri.

The first staff consisted of Mac Cahal, the AAGP Executive Director, who was named Secretary-Treasurer of the AAGP Foundation, and Helen Cobb, his executive assistant. Two voluntary contributions helped to establish a corpus of funds for the fledgling Foundation: The first was a \$1,000 donation from Marion Laboratories (now part of Sanofi) of Kansas City, Missouri, and the second came from A.W. Breckenkamp, administrator of the AAGP Group Disability Insurance Plans (now AAFP Insurance Services, Inc.).

The late ‘60s were a significant time for the Foundation. It helped to support efforts to establish family practice training programs by making grants and sponsoring a series of national conferences on how to provide comprehensive care to American families. In 1966, the corporate name was changed to the Family Health Foundation of America. A.W. Breckenkamp had continued his generous gifts by making the first bequest to the Foundation in 1963; he died in 1967, generating substantial profits for the Foundation through his estate. A few years later in 1969, Family Practice was approved as medicine’s twentieth specialty and the FHFA funded the publication of *The Role of the Family Physician in America’s Developing Medical Care Program*.

The years to follow were quite prosperous. Today, the Foundation works to seek project-specific grants for Academy programs and administers a number of programs of its own. Through the years these have included family training programs, national conferences on how to provide comprehensive care to American families, the Corporate Supporter Program, the Network of Chapter

Foundations, the Joint AAFP/F-AAFP Grant Awards Program (JGAP), Family Medicine Cares International, Family Medicine Cares USA, the Family Medicine Philanthropic Consortium (FMPC), the joint AAFP/F-AAFP NRN Family Medicine Discovers program, the Center for the History of Family Medicine) and many more.

The Foundation is supported by AAFP member contributions, corporate member dues and by grants from private foundations and corporations. Over the years it has continued to fulfill its mission of improving the health of the American people and supporting scientific, educational and charitable initiatives within the specialty of Family Medicine.