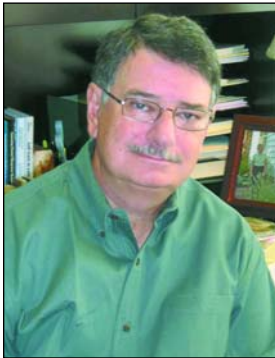


Special Letter from the Publishers of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*

To the readers of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*:



Gordon H. DeFrieze, PhD

This issue marks a significant transition in the leadership of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*. Gordon H. DeFrieze, PhD, served as the Editor-in-Chief of the NCMJ since 2002. Gordon brought the *Journal* under publication of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NC IOM) during a time when its future was uncertain. His ambition was to expand and enhance the *Journal* to meet the need for health policy discussions in the state of North Carolina. Through Gordon's passionate dedication, he gathered financial and editorial support for the *Journal*, which became the state's leading avenue for disseminating health information and health policy solutions.

Under Gordon's leadership, the *Journal* highlighted timely and critical health policy issues such as the epidemic of childhood obesity, the need for direct care workers in long-term care, medical malpractice, quality of health care, and access to dental care. Gordon's nurturing of the *Journal* honored its long history, dating back to 1849, by strengthening its value to physicians and giving more exposure to important health policy issues beyond the physician community. Today, the *Journal* is distributed to more than 30,000 readers across the state and the nation including physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, physician assistants, hospital and health care facilities administrators and leaders, other health professionals, health policy makers, and business and community leaders.

The *Journal's* success is a testament to Gordon's vision, energy, and service to improving the health of North Carolina's citizens. Although Gordon's work will continue in various other roles, he has retired from his position as Editor-in-Chief of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*. His tireless work and commitment strengthened the *Journal's* foundation so that its impact on the state will be ongoing.

Beginning with this issue, we are excited that Thomas C. Ricketts III, PhD, MPH, has agreed to serve as the Editor-in-Chief and carry on Gordon's valuable work. Tom, a professor in the School of Public Health and Deputy Director of Policy Analysis at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has also dedicated his career to improving the health of North Carolinians, as well as underserved populations throughout the country. He is an expert on health care topics including access, quality of care, rural health, workforce, and technology. His work is well respected by health care leaders throughout the nation and world, enabling him to bring national and international expertise to North Carolina issues. Tom's previous experience as editor of two national health journals provides new skills and perspectives that will allow him to place his own personal touch on the *Journal*.

With our sincerest thanks and gratitude for Gordon's work and a very warm welcome in anticipation of the direction of the *Journal* under Tom's leadership,

*Pam Silberman, JD, DrPH
President and CEO, NC IOM
Co-Publisher, NCMJ*

*Eugene W. Cochrane, Jr.
President, The Duke Endowment
Co-Publisher, NCMJ*