

Joel J. Alpert, MD (1930–2013)



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JOEL ALPERT, MD, graduated from Yale (1952) and Harvard Medical School (1956). After completing his residency at Children's Hospital, he joined the Harvard faculty where, among many responsibilities, he was principal investigator of a randomized trial that demonstrated the effectiveness of primary care. Joel was among the earliest academic generalist pediatricians and provided important leadership to the field. Joel became professor and chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine and Boston City Hospital in 1972, in order to "train people to do" instead of "training them to teach." Joel pioneered pediatric primary care training, including continuity clinic sites at community health centers, which were among the first in the nation. Before this time, most resident clinics did not have preceptors, continuity of care, or even expectation that clinic time took precedence over other responsibilities. It was a different world.

He published, along with Evan Charney, MD, *The Education of Physicians for Primary Care* (1973), which included the definition of primary care adopted by the

Bureau of Health Professions. He was one of the first recipients of Title VII funding to provide training for primary care. At about the same time, he received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to evaluate the long-term outcomes of the trainees.

Joel was president of the Ambulatory Pediatric Association in 1969 and the American Academy of Pediatrics from 1998 to 1999. He received the AAP Job Lewis Smith Award in Community Pediatrics (1994), the APA George Armstrong Award (1992), the APA Lifetime Career Achievement Award (2000), and the APA Public Policy and Advocacy Award (2002). He was also a member of the Institute of Medicine and AOA (Boston University). He has authored 154 articles and chapters in books. Joel was an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (London, UK) as well as the Philippine and Spanish Ambulatory Pediatric Associations.

Joel leaves his beloved wife of 56 years, Barbara; his children, Norman, Mark, and Deborah, and their spouses; and eight grandchildren.