



In Memoriam

Primary care advocate, Dr. Starfield led health equality efforts

A leading advocate of primary care who developed child assessment tools used daily by pediatricians, **Barbara Starfield, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP**, 78, of Baltimore, died June 10 of an apparent heart attack while swimming at her home.



Dr. Starfield

Dr. Starfield led the development of the Child Health Illness Profile Primary Care Assessment Tool. Her ideas formed the concept behind the Johns Hopkins Adjusted Clinical Groups System, a measure of morbidity that improves accuracy and fairness in evaluating provider performance, identifying patients at high risk, forecasting health care utilization and setting equitable payment rates.

Chair (1988-'92) and member (1992-'94) of the AAP Council on Pediatric Research, her AAP involvement also included serving as a member of the Task Force on Preventive Child Health Care (1978-'80) and the Steering Committee on Collaborative Office-Based Research (1985-'95). She was an independent member on the AAP Center for Child Health Research (1999-2006) and served on the *Pediatrics* editorial board (1978-'83).

At the time of her death, Dr. Starfield was distinguished professor with appointments in the Department of Health Policy and Management and Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University Schools of Public Health and Medicine and director of the Johns Hopkins University Primary Care Policy Center.

An advocate for a reorganized U.S. health system with primary care as the core, she believed pediatricians should focus less on diseases and more on health and thinking socially.

“She inspired so many academic pediatricians to look at the whole field of health services and particularly health services for children,” said Modena H. Wilson, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, who met and worked with Dr. Starfield in 1979 at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. “Her work has touched every pediatrician in practice in some way, whether he or she is aware of it or not. She’s made a great contribution to the improvement of health care for our nation and also a great contribution to training researchers who will carry on her good work.”

Dr. Starfield earned her M.D. in 1959 from State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center, completed her residency in pediatrics in 1962 at Johns Hopkins Hospital’s Harriet Lane Home, followed in 1963 by an M.P.H. in epidemiology at what was formerly named the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health. Her career at Johns Hopkins spanned more than 50 years.

Dr. Starfield was past president of the Academic Pediatric Association (APA) (1980-'81) and first president and co-founder of the International Society for Equity in Health (2000-'02). She also was a member of the Institute of Medicine, Society for Pediatric Research and American Pediatric Society. Her numerous honors included the APA Lifetime Achievement Award (2002) and Health and Human Services Special Recognition Award (1991).

Dr. Starfield is survived by her husband, Neil Holtzman, M.D., four children and eight grandchildren.

— *Trisha Koriath*