

45
SURGICAL ASSOCIATES, P.C.

33 MITCHELL AVENUE
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK 13903

PHONE (607) 724-3237

GEORGE F. GITLITZ, M.D., F.A.C.S.
MICHAEL A. BOGDASARIAN, M.D., F.A.C.S.

DIPLOMATES OF THE
AMERICAN BOARD OF SURGERY

Monday, December 30, 1985

Daniel F. O'Keeffe, M.D., President
Medical Society of the State of New York
Glens Falls

Dear Dr. O'Keeffe:

I was astonished to learn that Dr. Alan Blum will no longer be serving as Editor of the New York State Journal! It's hard to imagine how the Society could allow this person -- an internationally renowned authority in the field of preventive medicine, someone who adds lustre to the Society just by being on the premises -- to get away.

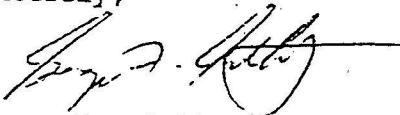
His most obvious contribution -- reason enough to bend every effort to retain his services -- has been his changing of the Journal from a pedestrian "house organ" to what is now a widely read and respected scientific publication. In addition to keeping Society members informed of essential Society business -- that goes without saying.

But more important, at a time when organized medicine seems to have only malpractice on the brain, and when young doctors in droves choose not to join state societies or the AMA because of a perceived lack of interest in, or certainly a commitment to, the real issues affecting the public's health and well-being -- Dr. Blum and the new Journal have given our Society an unmistakeable image as one which does have such a commitment.

The two issues of the Journal devoted to smoking, to which I was privileged to contribute, have been acclaimed as milestones in the history of Public Health, and have pre-empted the two giant national journals, the New England Journal and JAMA, which only later then rushed to get on this bandwagon. These issues alone gave the State Society recognition which no amount of Public Relations money could buy.

I hope that the State Society will immediately look into the reasons for Dr. Blum's leaving, and make every attempt to reverse what I believe is a disastrous event.

Sincerely,



George F. Gitlitz, M.D.
Past President, Broome County Med. Soc.;
Recipient, 1984 Lawrence D. Redway Award
for Medical Writing, MSSNY

cc: Dr. Charles Aswad

The American Journal of Dermatopathology

Editor-in-Chief: A. BERNARD ACKERMAN, M.D.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
530 FIRST AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016
212-340-7250

January 6, 1986

Dr. Daniel O'Keefe, President
Medical Society of the State of New York
45 Hudson Avenue
Glens Falls, New York 12801

Dear Dr. O'Keefe,

It has just been brought to my attention that Dr. Alan Blum has been dismissed as Editor of The New York State Journal of Medicine. I write to you now as a member of the Medical Society of the State of New York, an editor of a medical journal, and a physician who believes that if physicians do not treat one another decently, they surely will not treat patients well.

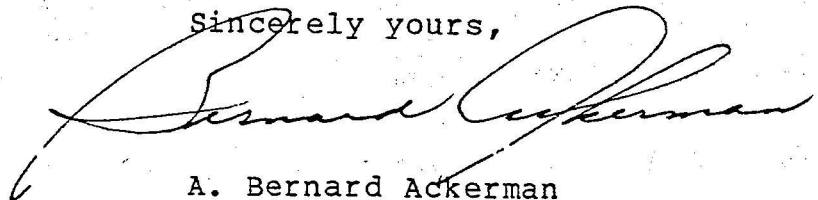
Of course I am not aware of all the details that led to the dismissal of Dr. Blum. What I have been told is that he was fired summarily without any warning, that he was given no reasons for his being fired, and that he was given no chance for a hearing before the Council of the Medical Society of the State of New York. If what I have heard is true, the firing of Dr. Blum is a stain on our society and on our profession.

From the vantage of an editor, The New York State Journal of Medicine prior to the editorship of Dr. Blum was little more than a rag. It was completely undistinguished and had no impact whatsoever on either the state or the nation. During the short tenure of Dr. Blum's editorship, The New York State Journal of Medicine has become one of the most important organs of our profession in the country. Not only has he raised the academic standards immeasurably, but he has brought a profound sense of social consciousness to the journal and to its readership. I regard his performance to be nothing less than spectacular.

O'Keefe, Page 2
1/6/86

If Dr. Blum has been dismissed for compelling academic or ethical issues, please disregard this letter. However, if his dismissal is a consequence of his having moral conviction and the courage to act upon it, then his firing is an act of cowardice and of infamy.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bernard Ackerman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

A. Bernard Ackerman

ABA:mch
cc: George Lawrence, M.D.
Charles Sherman, M.D.
John A Finkbeiner
Isadore Rosenfeld, M.D.

3230m



ANNALS of Internal Medicine

Published by the American College of Physicians

4200 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-4098 USA
(215) 243-1200 • (800) 523-1546 • TWX 710 670 0586

Edward J. Huth, M.D., *Editor*
David B. Nash, M.D., *Deputy Editor*

Kathleen Case, *Managing Editor*
Thomas J. Gillen, *Business Director*

January 6, 1986

Daniel F. O'Keefe, M. D.
President
Medical Society of the State of New York
45 Hudson Avenue
Glen Falls, NY 12801

Reference: File 4.1.2.1-1986 and 9.BLUM

Dear Doctor O'Keefe:

I write because I have just heard from Dr. Alan Blum of his apparently summary dismissal as editor of the Society's journal. I am very much concerned about this episode because I have gotten to know Dr. Blum through the meetings of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and I have been watching with great interest his remarkable job with the journal.

I do not presume to judge any merits or demerits of the action because I know none of the possibly relevant details. But if his dismissal was indeed summary, I strongly recommend that the appropriate body of the Society consider the matter carefully. The editor of a journal needs to have considerable independence if he or she is to be a competent editor. At the same time an editor may be quite vulnerable because of the importance of being single-minded to be successful as an editor. Editorial work in medicine is an odd corner of medicine worked in by very few persons with any prolonged dedication. But this does not mean that an M. D. editor should be treated with less ethical and procedural care than any other physician. If a physician is charged with conduct potentially unacceptable to a state licensing board, he or she is entitled to know specific charges and to have a public hearing of the matter. Should not an M. D. editor have discussed with him by the responsible body of the organization any dissatisfactions with policy or conduct, with the opportunity to make changes or to decide the post is no longer attractive? This seems to me to be the only fair and ethical procedure. An M. D. editor fired from a job as editor can have his or her subsequent career as an editor put into great jeopardy.



ANNALS
of Internal Medicine

Page 2

Daniel F. O'Keefe, M.D.

January 6, 1986

I believe that your Society has a good bit at stake in handling this episode properly.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Huth, M. D.

Editor

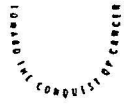
ANNALS OF INTERNAL MEDICINE

EJH/rb

cc: Alan Blum, M.D.

MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER

1275 YORK AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021



January 6, 1986

Daniel O'Keeffe, M.D.
President
New York State Medical Society
45 Hudson Avenue
Glens Falls, New York 12801

Re: Alan Blum, M.D.

Dear Doctor O'Keeffe:

Those of us dedicated to the problems caused by tobacco use were delighted by the two very effective issues of the New York State Journal on the subject. These have also caused widespread favorable reaction and Dr Alan Blum's courage in presenting them was admirable. It is also worth noting that the AMA is taking a public stance on cigarette advertising as well, and we should be proud of the fact that one of the first big guns fired was from our Society.

It is, therefore, with some concern that I learned of Dr. Blum's dismissal as editor of the Journal. The circumstances of his dismissal are not clear to me at the present time but I understand that there will be a Council meeting to discuss this matter. As in most situations of this type, there are always two sides to the question but I believe that you will assure Dr. Blum's receiving a fair hearing.

As this is of importance to many of us who are dedicated to anti-tobacco activities, I would very much appreciate hearing from you. I can also be reached by telephone at (212) 737-4734.

Thank you for your courtesy.

Sincerely yours,

William G. Cahan, M.D.
Attending Surgeon
Thoracic Service, Memorial Hospital
Emeritus Professor of Surgery
Cornell University Medical College

WGC/ba



INTERNAL MEDICINE

George R. Bengel, M.D.
Kenneth B. Cairns, M.D.
Elaine E. Fox, M.D.
Harvey Maron, M.D.
Dean D. Moriaco, M.D.
Richard J. P. Nebianco, M.D.
Edwin C. Rowe, M.D.
John E. Shields, M.D., F.A.C.G.

SURGERY

John J. Cossentino, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Thomas P. Higgins, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Anthony T. Petrillo, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Sidney H. Saffer, M.D.

FAMILY PRACTICE

Gerald I. Leichman, M.D., D.A.B.F.P.
Hans D. Schwinn, M.D., D.A.B.F.P.

ADMINISTRATION

Martha A. Baird, Admin. Mgr.

January 7, 1986

Dr. Cleve Kaplan
111 Carlton Avenue
Islip Terrace NY 11752

Dear Dr. Kaplan:

I have heard rumors of an abrupt dismissal of Dr. Alan Blum, editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine. I have had some past contact with him. To me he has always been extremely excellent. I have submitted a recent article to him that he has been working on hard with me. I certainly would wonder -- why an abrupt dismissal? Could you give me information on this? Has this been adequately investigated? Is this a responsible decision with which you concur?

I would appreciate any information and to be sure that this is a wise and justified move that has been made. Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

Kenneth B. Cairns, M.D.

Southampton Office
KBC:sla

January 8, 1936

Dr. Daniel F. O'Keefe,
45 Hudson Ave.,
Glens Falls,
New York, 12809

Dear Dr. O'Keefe:

I was amazed and horrified to learn, last night, that Alan Blum had been summarily dismissed as Editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine by Dr. George Lawrence, apparently without your knowledge, or that of Dr. Milton Gordon, Chairman of the Committee of Publications. Certainly, I as a member of the Committee, knew nothing of what was going on.

I thought that we had an excellent Journal under his leadership, ranking equal to or above any other such publication, with the possible exception of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The only reason Dr. Blum can find for his dismissal is his two issues on Smoking. Could there be pressure from advertising behind this?

If this is the way things are run, you can accept my resignation from the Committee on Publications. It does not seem to have any function.

Very truly yours,

Eliza H. Caldwell
Eliza H. Caldwell

cc: Dr. Milton Gordon

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA



OFFICE OF MEDICAL EXAMINER
1050 N.W. 19TH STREET
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136
(305) 549-7342

January 8, 1986

Daniel F. O'Keefe, M.D.
45 Hudson Avenue
Glen Falls, N.Y. 12801

Dear Dr. O'Keefe:

I recently learned that Dr. Alan Blum will no longer be in the employ of the Medical Society of the State of New York's journal. This is indeed unfortunate for under his leadership the Journal was in the vanguard of the current antismoking campaign to fulfill the Surgeon General's plan to omit smoking by the end of this century.

I certainly hope that the Journal can keep its leadership in this campaign. It would be a pity for such a voice of organized medicine to be stilled when we need all the help we can get to improve our nation's health and our image as concerned physicians.

Sincerely,

Joseph H. Davis, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner
Professor of Pathology
Chairman, Judicial Council
Florida Medical Association
Past President, Dade County
Medical Association

Dr. Alan Blum ✓

JAN 9 1985

Daniel F. O'Keefe, M.D.
153 Bay Street
Glens Falls, New York 12801

Dear Dr. O'Keefe:

It has come to my attention that there are forces at work to remove Dr. Alan Blum from his post as Editor of the New York State Medical Journal. I also understand, as one might expect, that there are many who feel that this would be a grave injustice and the loss of an excellent editor.

Alan Blum has made the New York State Medical Journal, through its two special issues on smoking, a journal of national and international significance. I probably am as deeply involved in the smoking issue, here and abroad, as anyone, and I can attest to the fact that whether in foreign Ministries of Health or talking with private sector activists, Alan Blum has put the New York State Medical Journal on the map, and has given it credibility far above that of most such journals.

Although I realize that what happens inside of the New York State Medical Society is really not my business, I do feel that it is my business to call your attention to the great loss, on the national and international scene, that Alan Blum's departure would be.

The eyes of the whole public health world are on your journal. I hope that if the information I have is correct, that you will do whatever is possible to see that Alan Blum is retained to continue the work he has begun in your State, but which echoes throughout the world.

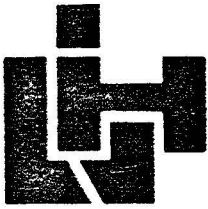
Sincerely yours,

/s/C. Everett Koop, M.D. *CK*
C. Everett Koop, M.D.
Surgeon General

cc: Dr. John Finkbeiner
1015 Michigan Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dr. Charles Sherman
Highland Hospital
Rochester, New York 14620

Dictated by CERkoop:vsc, 1/8/85



Dr. Blum

LONG ISLAND JEWISH MEDICAL CENTER • NEW HYDE PARK, NEW YORK 11042

(718) 470-7212

ERIC MUNOZ, M.D., M.B.A.
HEAD, RESEARCH DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

January 10, 1986

Sam Gelfand, M.D.
Vice President of Medical Society of
the State of New York
155 West Merrick Road
Freeport, NY 11520

Re: Dr. Alan Blum, Editor of New York
State Journal of Medicine

Dear Dr. Gelfand;

I was extremely distressed to hear of the recent difficulties of Dr. Alan Blum regarding his editorship of the New York State Journal of Medicine. Having moved within the last two years to the Long Island area, I have followed the activity of both the Journal and the of Medical Society. I feel that there has been a gradual improvement in the overall quality of the Journal. In addition, I feel that it was judicious of the Medical Society to support a young editor and scientist. I have now been informed that there is a serious concern about continuing Dr. Blum in this regard; I thus have a much more reserved outlook regarding my commitment to the New York State Society of Medicine.

I would urge you to reconsider any change of editorship or leadership of the New York State Journal very carefully. I realize there may be internal conflicts within your organization presently which may influence the exchange. However as a relatively new and young member of the New York State medical community, I believe that both Society and the Journal would be better served by continuing Dr. Blum in his present position.

I look forward to your attention to this matter. Feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Eric Munoz, M.D., M.B.A.
Head, Research Division
Department of Surgery, LLJMC





UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

Office of the Dean

2411 E. James Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
Telephone: 816-474-4100

January 15, 1986

Dr. Dan O'Keeffe
President, Medical Society
State of New York
45 Hudson Avenue
Glens Falls, NY 12801


Dear Dr. O'Keeffe:

I am writing this letter in behalf of Dr. Alan Blum, who has been serving as editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine. I have been acquainted with Dr. Blum for some time since he served as a visiting professor and Docent at our institution a few years ago. Recently, I have followed his professional activities and have been a great admirer of his editorial talents as the editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine.

Dr. Blum has taken some forthright stands on important public health issues facing our nation and I believe that the Journal, under his editorial leadership, has become a quality publication which has received considerable national and international attention.

I strongly support therefore, the continuation of Dr. Blum in his editorial role with the publication of the Medical Society of the state of New York.

Sincerely yours,


Harry S. Jonas, M.D.
Dean

HSJ:mjg



AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

535 NORTH DEARBORN STREET • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610 • PHONE (312) 645-5000 • TWX 910-221-0300

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RONALD M. DAVIS, M.D.
Centers for Disease Control
Center for Prevention Services
Division of Immunization
1600 Clifton Road, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

January 15, 1986

Daniel S. O'Keefe, M.D.
President
Medical Society of the State
of New York
420 Lakeville Road
Lake Success, NY 11042

Dear Dr. O'Keefe,

I understand that Alan Blum, M.D., has been released recently from his position as editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine.

I have known Dr. Blum since 1980, when I first became involved in organized medicine. I have found him to have a sincere, undying dedication to promoting the health of the patient and the community. He has consistently pursued his beliefs in the halls of organized medicine, in both his professional and voluntary activities. Dr. Blum's journalistic achievements at the Journal of the American Medical Association (as a Morris Fishbein fellow), at the Medical Journal of Australia, and at the New York State Journal of Medicine, have been substantial and commendable. In particular, his literary contributions in the area of tobacco and health, as author and editor, are unsurpassed. His departure would leave a void in this important area that few others would be able to fill.

Dr. Blum's dismissal from the New York State Journal of Medicine, I believe, would be detrimental to both the Journal and to the medical and public health communities, which benefit so much from his talents and efforts. I hope that the Society will consider reinstating Dr. Blum as editor of the Journal.

Thank you very much for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

Ronald M. Davis, M.D.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109-2029

January 17, 1986

Daniel O'Keeffe, MD
President
Medical Society of the State of New York
45 Hudson Avenue
Glens Falls, NY 12801

Dear Dr. O'Keeffe:

I was appalled and saddened to learn of the firing of Alan Blum, MD, as editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine. It is difficult to imagine the Society's reasons for this action. I am saddened for the Society and the Journal, which Dr. Blum has single-handedly put on the national and international map; for Dr. Blum himself; and mostly for our society, which is losing what has proved to be an effective forum for one of this country's most articulate and powerful voices in the battle to avoid preventable morbidity and mortality.

I know Dr. Blum well. I can readily imagine that he is not the easiest person with whom to work. At the same time, I cannot imagine many people whose work is more important. Dr. Blum's approach to medicine is certainly not conventional, yet I and dozens of colleagues are convinced that he has made a more substantial contribution to the public's health in the time he has been with the Journal than all but a handful of physicians make in an entire lifetime of practicing medicine. His leadership is exemplified directly by the widespread and continuing attention that the two all-tobacco issues have received (truly on an international scale; I know this from meetings with colleagues as far away as China). Indirectly, Dr. Blum's leadership is reflected in the fact that JAMA is now publishing its third all-tobacco issue: I suspect that JAMA's efforts in this direction were at least strongly encouraged by the model established by the New York State Journal.

While I am genuinely distressed by the firing of Dr. Blum, my strong suspicion is that the ultimate victim of this action will be the Journal itself. I feel badly for the disruption and dislocation that Dr. Blum will experience as a result of your decision. I am confident, however, that his articulate and enormously important voice will find another vehicle through which to be heard and thus to influence the medical profession and the society at large.

I would be most grateful for an explanation of the basis of your action.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Warner, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairman

cc: Milton Gordon, MD
Philip Bonanni, MD
(cc's continued)

BRENT ALAN BLUE, M.D.

POST OFFICE BOX 4143
JACKSON, WYOMING 83001

FAMILY MEDICINE OFFICE
415 EAST PEARL STREET
JACKSON, WYOMING 83001
(307) 733-8002

GRAND TETON MEDICAL CLINIC
AT JACKSON LAKE LODGE
GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK
MORAN, WYOMING 83013
(307) 543-2514

January 22, 1986

President, Medical Society of
State of New York
Box 5405
Lake Success, New York 11042

Dear Sir:

I would like to express my severe dismay at the sudden termination of Alan Blum, MD, as editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine.

Dr. Blum has done tremendous things for the Journal and his health promotion issues concerning smoking have put the Journal on the "map" nationally.

Since Dr. Blum was terminated without apparent cause, I must question the integrity of the system. I urge your society to correct its error.

Sincerely yours,

Brent A. Blue, MD

BAB/qtg

BC Alan



OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Elmer H. Korman, M.D.

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Clive Caplan, M.D.

VICE-PRESIDENT

William H. Weir, Jr., M.D.

SECRETARY

Robert A. Held, M.D.

TREASURER

Jerry A. Wider, M.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Coleman M. C. Fineberg, CAE

THE SUFFOLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

850 Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, Long Island, N.Y. 11788 (516) 265-8866

January 22, 1986

To the Council of the Medical Society
of the State of New York

Gentlemen:

The Suffolk County Medical Society is very disturbed by the news of the precipitate and harsh dismissal of the Editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine.

We feel that justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done.

If the dismissal of Dr. Alan Blum is, indeed, already a "fait accompli" then we regret the loss of this talented servant of MSSNY. We hope that this is not so.

If it is, sadly, the case, then it remains for us to treat fairly this employee whose financial and professional life has been ruined by his association with our state medical society. The whole course of events reflects very badly upon the public image of MSSNY and we should act to repair it.

We urge that Dr. Alan Blum be given a six months period of severance pay and an extension of his medical insurance so that the pregnancy and delivery of his wife is within the umbrella of his health insurance.

PASSED BY VOTE OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Richard D. Lamm
Governor

Frank A. T aylor, M.D.
Executive Director

January 22, 1986

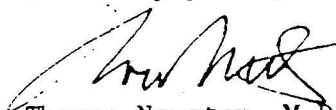
Daniel O'Keefe, M.D.
45 Hudson
Glen Falls, NY 12801

Dear Dr. O'Keefe:

I am writing this letter concerning the dismissal of Dr. Alan Blum, as editor of the New York State Medical Journal. I can only point out to you that we in the public health field feel that Dr. Blum has provided a remarkable contribution to the efforts directed against the smoking epidemic. The two New York State Medical Journals are quoted widely and distributed widely to professionals working in this field. You and the Board of the New York State Medical Society have silenced a very important voice whose efforts in smoking control have been extremely valuable. Dr. Blum has been on the leading edge of the fight against cigarette smoking, and he has provided, through the publication of the New York State Medical Journal, a focus for wide-spread activities in the field of tobacco studies.

I know it is rather late for you to reconsider your decision, but I hope that you realize that there are a great many of us who think that your action is reprehensible and inappropriate. We hope that your future editor will carry on the work that Dr. Blum has started and that the concerns for the smoking issue perpetuate those of Dr. Blum.

Sincerely yours,


Thomas Novotny, M.D.
Medical Epidemiologist

TN/mr

cc: Alan Blum, M.D.
✓ 116 Webster Ave.
Manhasset, NY 11030

Pete Bialick
GASP
Box 12103
Boulder, CO 80303



American College of Physicians

4200 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

(215) 243-1200

(800) 523-1546

TWX 710 670 0586

Robert H. Moser, MD, MACP
Executive Vice President

January 23, 1986

Dr. Daniel O'Keeffe
45 Hudson Avenue
Glens Falls, NY 12801

Dear Doctor O'Keeffe:

It has come to my attention that Dr. Alan Blum has been discharged as editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine under rather disturbing circumstances. I am distressed because Alan has done a superb job with the Journal and, as a professional journalist, I regret he will no longer be the guiding spirit of that splendid publication.

But even more disturbing is Alan's account of how he was dismissed. I am sure you will ensure that he is accorded appropriate "due process" - in consonance with the tradition of fairness that is the hallmark of your society.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Moser, M.D., M.A.C.P.
Executive Vice President

RHM/mrc

cc: Dr. Alan Blum

RICHARD H. OVERHOLT, M.D.

INCORPORATED

135 FRANCIS STREET

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02215

(617) 738-7810

Copy

COPY

January 24, 1986

Daniel F. O'Keeffe, M. D.
45 Hudson Avenue
Glens Falls, New York 12801

Dear Dr. O'Keeffe:

Through the grapevine, I have learned that Dr. Alan Blum is no longer editor of the New York State Journal of Medicine. In view of the fact that this publication is sponsored by the Medical Society of your state, I thought I would write to you as president of your state society concerning this sad news.

I have always considered Dr. Blum to be one of the outstanding editors of any medical journal. I have also come in contact with him in regard to the cigarette and health issue and his efforts to expose the cover-up of the industry of the health hazards of their product. The two volumes of the New York State Journal devoted almost exclusively to the issue at stake and of the doctor's obligation to meet this problem head-on were outstanding examples of his leadership.

I hope you will use your considerable influence to take measures to re-establish him as editor.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Overholt

RHO/rcs
enclosure
Copy of Reprint
The Physician's Obligation
in the Smoking Issue
New York State Journal
of Medicine June 1, 1964

Dr Milton Gordon. Chairman of the Library, Archives, and
Publications Committee of the Medical Society of the State
of New York

The Trustees of the Medical Society of the State of New York

Dear Sirs,

We are very sorry to hear that Dr Alan Blum has been
dismissed as editor of the New York State Journal of
Medicine. We do not know the details of why Dr Blum has been
dismissed, but we do know that the journal has gone from
strength to strength since he has been editor. Particularly
impressive have been the special issues on smoking and
minorities and medicine: these have gained the journal - and
your medical society - considerable international attention
and admiration

We also know Dr Blum because of his work with the group of
international medical editors, and he has made a
considerable and useful contribution.

As a result of our many international contacts we emphasise
the importance of preserving a large measure of editorial
independence when a journal is owned by a society. Of
course, in the last analysis editors must be answerable to
the members of the society, whom they exist to serve, but a
good journal is difficult if not impossible to achieve if
the editor every day must answer to the officers of the
society.

The reports reaching us suggest that Dr Blum was dismissed
in a peremptory way without being warned and without
discussion with the committees that run the society and the
journal. If this is true, we think it very sad that such a
creative editor should be so casually lost.

Yours sincerely

British Medical Journal,
BMA House,
Tavistock Square,
London WC1H 9JR

Stephen Lock,
Editor

Richard Smith,
Assistant editor

Lancet,
7 Adam Street,
London WC2N 6AD

Ian Munro,
Editor

Robin Fox,
Deputy editor