



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Alfredo Morabia, MD, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
American Journal of Public Health
800 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3710

Dear Dr. Morabia:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more publications like American Journal of Public Health are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
- How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?
- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
- How do you assess the role played by government officials and funding organizations like the National Institutes of Health in the development of submitted articles?

- How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?

I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?

I look forward to I look forward to and appreciate your cooperation with my letter of inquiry after request. Please respond by May 2, 2025. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office or schedule a time to meet in person.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed R. Martin Jr", written in a cursive style.

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Dr. Jason D. Wright, MD
Editor-in-Chief, Obstetrics & Gynecology
409 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024-2188

Dear Dr. Wright:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like Obstetrics & Gynecology are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
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- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
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All the best,

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.
U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

Feast of St. Joseph 2025

Dr. Lewis R. First, MD
Editor, Pediatrics Journal
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
University of Vermont College of Medicine
89 Beaumont Ave, S261
Burlington, VT 05405



Dear Dr. First,

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals like *Pediatrics* are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). This is a growing concern especially because you choose to publish *Pediatrics* through AAP which is a corporation set up under federal law with a public benefit (under section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
- How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?

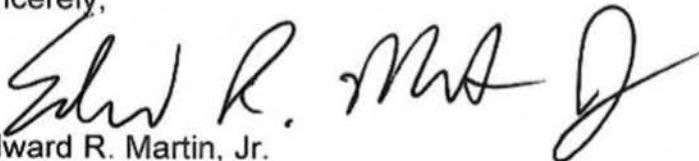
- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
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I look forward to your cooperation with my letter of inquiry after request. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please respond by April 11, 2025. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office or schedule a time to meet in person.

All the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edw R. Martin Jr", written in a cursive style.

Edward R. Martin, Jr.

United States Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

Feast of St. Joseph 2025

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Editor, Pediatrics Journal
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
University of Vermont College of Medicine
89 Beaumont Ave, S261
Burlington, VT 05405



Dear Dr. First,

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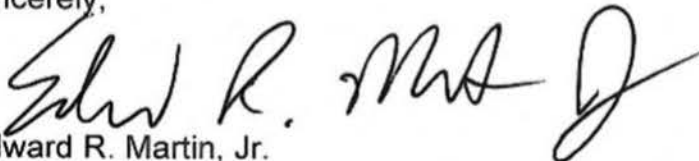
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Edward R. Martin, Jr.

United States Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Dr. Suresh S. Ramalingam, MD
Editor-in-Chief, Cancer Journal
270 Peachtree St NW, Suite 1300
Atlanta, GA 30303



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dr. Ramalingam", is written over the redacted address area.

Dear Dr. Ramalingam:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more publications like Cancer Journal are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
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All the best,

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.
U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Ms. Jeanna Bryner
Interim Editor in Chief, Scientific American
1 New York Plaza, Suite 4600
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Bryner:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mr. Bryner," is written over a black redacted area.

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like Scientific American are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
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All the best,

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Ms. Jeanna Bryner
Interim Editor in Chief, Scientific American
1 New York Plaza, Suite 4600
New York, NY 10004

[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Bryner:

Mr. Bryner,

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like Scientific American are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
- How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?
- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
- How do you assess the role played by government officials and funding organizations like the National Institutes of Health in the development of submitted articles?

- How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?

I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?

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All the best,

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

March 28, 2025

João Monteiro, MD PhD
Editor-in-Chief, Nature Medicine
One New York Plaza, Suite 4500
New York, NY 10004-1562



Dear Dr. Monteiro or Whom it May Concern:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals/publications like *Nature* are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
- How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?
- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
- How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?

I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?

I look forward to your cooperation with my letter of inquiry after request. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please respond by April 18, 2025. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office or schedule a time to meet in person.

All the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edw R. Martin Jr", written in a cursive style.

Edward R. Martin, Jr.

United States Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

March 28, 2025

Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, PhD, MD, MAS
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)
330 N Wabash Ave
Chicago, IL 60611-5885



Dear Dr. Bibbins-Domingo or To Whom it May Concern,

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals like *JAMA* are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). This is a growing concern especially because you choose to publish *JAMA* through AMA which is a corporation set up under federal law with a public benefit (under section 501(c)(6) of Title 26 of the United States Code). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities. (To be clear, my questions are regarding all the *JAMA* publishing including but not limited to *JAMA*, *JAMA Network Open*, and the 11 *JAMA* specialty journals.)

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
- How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?
- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?

- How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?

I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?

I look forward to your cooperation with my letter of inquiry after request. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please respond by April 25, 2025. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office or schedule a time to meet in person.

All the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edw R. Martin Jr", written in a cursive style.

Edward R. Martin, Jr.

United States Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

March 28, 2025

Eric J. Rubin, M.D., Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief, New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)
NEJM Group
860 Winter Street
Waltham, MA 02451-1413

Dear Dr. Rubin or To Whom it May Concern,

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals like *NEJM* are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). This is a growing concern especially because you choose to publish *NEJM* through the Massachusetts Medical Society (The Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation) which is a corporation set up under federal law with a public benefit (under section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
- How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?
- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
- How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?

I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?

I look forward to your cooperation with my letter of inquiry after request. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please respond by April 25, 2025. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office or schedule a time to meet in person.

All the best.

Sincerely,

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Peter Mazzone, MD, MPH
Editor-in-Chief, CHEST Journal
2595 Patriot Boulevard
Glenview, IL 60026

[REDACTED]
Dear Dr. Mazzone:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like CHEST Journal are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

- How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?
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- Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?
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- How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?

I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?

I look forward to I look forward to and appreciate your cooperation with my letter of inquiry after request. Please respond by May 2, 2025. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office or schedule a time to meet in person.

All the best,

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Dr. Sarina Schrager, MD, MS
Family Medicine Journal
2021 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
[REDACTED]

Dear Dr. Schrager:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like Family Medicine Journal are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.
U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Dr. Sumi M. Sexton, MD, FAAFP
Editor-in-Chief, American Family Physician
11400 Tomahawk Creek Pkwy
Leawood, KS 66211-2672
[REDACTED]

Dear Dr. Sexton:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like American Family Physician are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Dr. Sumi M. Sexton, MD, FAAFP
Editor-in-Chief, American Family Physician
11400 Tomahawk Creek Pkwy
Leawood, KS 66211-2672
[REDACTED]

Dear Dr. Sexton:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more journals and publications like American Family Physician are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia



U.S. Department of Justice

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney

District of Columbia

*Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

April 14, 2025

Valda J. Vinson, PhD
Executive Editor, Science Journals
1200 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
[REDACTED]

Dear Dr. Vinson:

As United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, I receive frequent requests for information and clarification. I take these requests seriously and act on them with letters like this one you are receiving.

It has been brought to my attention that more and more publications like the Science journals are conceding that they are partisans in various scientific debates - that is, that they have a position for which they are advocating either due to advertisement (under postal code) or sponsorship (under relevant fraud regulations). The public has certain expectations and you have certain responsibilities.

Would you please answer these questions:

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Edward R. Martin, Jr.
U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia

May 2, 2025

[REDACTED]

Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney
District of Columbia
Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Martin:

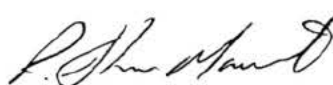
I am the Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and I write in response to your letter dated April 14, 2025, to Dr. Sumi Sexton.

As you may know, *American Family Physician (AFP)* is a monthly, peer-reviewed medical journal of the American Academy of Family Physicians. It publishes original, evidence-based, clinical content relevant to family physicians and other clinicians, enhancing their ability to care for patients at the point of care and beyond. Examples of typical topics covered in *AFP* include assessing cardiovascular risk, cancer screening and prevention, diagnosis and management of rheumatoid arthritis, treatment strategies for acute migraine headaches, and diagnosing dementia and cognitive impairments in symptomatic patients.

AFP endorses the ethics principles and standards of the Committee of Publication Ethics, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, and the World Association of Medical Editors. Through its policies and practices, *AFP* strives to promote objective, evidence-based information that reflects varied perspectives, along with the research and clinical experience informing them, so that readers may fairly assess, and even challenge, that information.

We hope this letter helps to clear up any questions you may have had about the journal's operations. Any further correspondence regarding this matter should be directed to Heather Leith, General Counsel for the American Academy of Family Physicians. She can be reached at hleith@aafp.org or at (913) 906-6219.

Very truly yours,



R. Shawn Martin

11400 Tomahawk Creek Pkwy.
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(913) 906-6000

www.aafp.org



William Dahut, M.D.
Chief Scientific Officer

Every cancer. Every life.™

Via E-mail

May 2, 2025

U.S. Department of Justice
Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney, District of Columbia
Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear United States Attorney Martin:

I write in response to your letter dated April 14, 2025 addressed to Dr. Suresh Ramalingam regarding the content published in *Cancer Journal* (“*Cancer*”). As a scientist and as a clinician, I firmly believe in showing our work, and it is also through inquiry and response that the scientific and clinical communities continue to grow in rigor and transparency. Your inquiry reflects an interest in ensuring that publications of medical journals remain both evidence-based and patient-centered, which are two tenets that *Cancer* fully embodies.

Published since 1948, *Cancer* is one of the oldest and universally well-respected peer-reviewed oncology journals. As a journal of the American Cancer Society (ACS), it provides a forum for the exchange of information among the oncologic disciplines concerned with the etiology, course, and treatment of human cancer—one of the leading causes of death worldwide.

Cancer is dedicated to providing highly relevant, evidence-based, timely information to a broad audience of oncology professionals and related specialists. The journal achieves this mandate by publishing original research and review articles that facilitate the translation of knowledge from the laboratory to clinical practice. These publications contribute to cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation, while also aiming to reduce the burden of cancer-related suffering.

With its comprehensive international and interdisciplinary scope, *Cancer* has established itself as a leading journal for authors seeking to share innovative research with a global audience. Since 2021, articles published in *Cancer* have been downloaded over 19 million times. On average, one in six articles is featured in major news outlets or discussed on social media, highlighting the real-world impact of the research published in the journal. The journal’s readership includes leading specialists from around the world, such as oncologists, hematologists, radiologists, basic science researchers, epidemiologists, pathologists, cancer

prevention experts, urologists, gastroenterologists, endocrinologists, pulmonologists, and otolaryngologists amongst others.

Administrations across the political spectrum have relied on *Cancer's* rigorous studies, epidemiological data, and oncological insights to inform decisions on healthcare funding, screening guidelines, and cancer prevention initiatives. Because the journal prioritizes scientific integrity over any particular viewpoint, it serves as a noncontroversial, science-based source of information that can be accessed to combat cancer and expand access to treatment.

Cancer's team and structure are designed to ensure rigorous peer review and uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity and objectivity. The Editor-in-Chief is assisted by both the Editorial Advisory Board as well as the Section Editors. The Editorial Advisory Board is responsible for providing expert guidance and oversight to maintain the journal's scientific quality and relevance. It includes nearly one hundred clinicians who specialize in cancer-related fields. The Section Editors are responsible for initially reviewing submitted manuscripts to determine whether research and scientific methods have been followed, not whether the conclusion is "mainstream" or "correct." In this way, the Section Editors do not engage in any type of content moderation, but rather ensure the appropriate level of research and citation is present. Editors include experts on a particular topic who have established leadership in their field. Editors serve for two-year terms, which can be renewed.

Cancer operates as an online-only journal, enabling the continuous publication of articles. Consequently, as soon as an article has completed the editorial and production process, it is made immediately available to readers worldwide. These published articles are compiled into a new online issue every two weeks. In the past year alone, the journal published a total of 483 articles, reflecting its commitment to disseminating timely and impactful research.

Cancer publishes a diverse range of article types to accommodate the breadth of research and scholarship in oncology. These article types are as follows:

- Original Articles. Original Articles are scientific reports of the results of original clinical research. A manuscript must include a data availability statement (informing readers of where and how the data supporting the findings of the study can be accessed), IRB statement (disclosing research involving human participants), and may include up to six tables and/or figures.
- Commentaries. Commentaries present a point of view of general interest not related to an article in the same issue of *Cancer*. A manuscript may include up to six tables and/or figures.
- Review Articles. Review Articles offer timely, in-depth treatment of a specific issue. A manuscript may include up to six tables and/or figures.
- Editorials. Editorials are opinion pieces by practitioners in oncologic specialties.

- Letters to the Editor. Letters to the Editor are related to papers previously published in *Cancer*.
- Clinical Practice Guidelines. Clinical Practice Guidelines are public statements from an organization or representative group of experts that include evidence-based recommendations to optimize patient care.
- Consensus Statements. Consensus Statements are public statements from a representative group of experts that provide guidance on an issue for the purpose of advancing understanding and improving patient care.
- Position Statement. Position Statements are public statements from an organization on a position relevant to clinical practice, health policy, or social concerns.
- Insight From the Experts. Insight From the Experts offers research, approaches, and perspectives that provide readers with honest, earned wisdom and guidance from established experts in oncology specialties. This form of publication is uncommon and typically includes insight derived from, for example, an expert's high-profile presentation on research relating to patient care.
- Cancer Case Conundrums. Cancer Case Conundrums present unusual cases and questions without an obvious solution. These cases must be about real-world patients and the complexities that arose from their treatment.

As a prestigious journal, we receive many manuscripts from authors who wish to publish their work with us. Most of these manuscripts are unsolicited and must undergo a rigorous pre-publication process to meet high standards of objective quality and relevance.

Manuscripts that pass an initial screening are assigned to one of *Cancer's* Section Editors who has expertise in the subject area that is the topic of the manuscript. The Section Editors review the manuscripts in more depth and select the ones that are suitable for peer review. Peer review is an essential and mandatory step for any manuscript that we publish. During this step, the manuscripts are sent to at least two peer reviewers, who are volunteers from the medical community and have the option to receive Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for their participation. The peer reviewers provide comments and feedback on the manuscripts. *Cancer* operates under a single-anonymized peer review model: The author does not know the identities of the reviewers. The benefits of this model are that anonymity allows reviewers to be honest without fear of criticism from the author.

After the peer review process is completed, the manuscripts are returned to the Section Editors, who make the final decision on whether to accept, reject, or request further revisions. The Section Editors also ensure that the manuscripts comply with our editorial policies and ethical

guidelines. Only the manuscripts that meet all these requirements are accepted for publication in *Cancer*.

For manuscripts that are rejected, *Cancer* offers authors an appeals process. Authors may appeal an editorial decision if they feel that the decision to reject was based on either a significant misunderstanding of a core aspect of the manuscript, a failure to understand how the manuscript advances the literature, or concerns regarding the manuscript-handling process.

As the foregoing makes clear, *Cancer* takes its role as a thought leader in the oncology space seriously and has built robust processes to guard against the specific concerns you raised in your letter. More specifically, however, please see our responses to your questions:

1. “How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?”

Given its commitment to objectivity and scientific scholarship, *Cancer* is deeply committed to publishing articles that meet the highest standards of scientific rigor and quality. The importance of our work cannot be overstated, as the research we publish has a direct impact on patient care and outcomes.

Pre-publication, *Cancer*’s rigorous editorial and peer review process is designed to identify and exclude manuscripts that do not meet our criteria for scientific excellence. Reflecting the selectivity of our process, the journal’s acceptance rate last year was just nine percent.

Post-publication, *Cancer* and its partner publisher Wiley follow comprehensive processes and procedures to address and correct errors in the published record. The journal thoroughly investigates every credible allegation concerning the integrity and accuracy of our articles. Upon receiving an allegation through a whistleblower, even if sent anonymously, the team informs Wiley’s Integrity Assurance & Case Resolution Team for investigation and recommended resolution. When it is determined that the findings of a published article are unreliable, retractions are issued in accordance with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Retraction Guidelines. As outlined by Wiley, articles may be retracted if:

- There is major error which would invalidate the conclusions of the article, for example, where there is clear evidence that findings are unreliable, either as a result of misconduct (e.g., data fabrication) or honest error (e.g., misinterpretation, miscalculation, or experimental error) or a major conflict of interest which could have affected the interpretation of the research;
- Where the findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper cross-referencing, permission, or justification (i.e., cases of redundant publication);
- Where there are ethical issues such as plagiarism (appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit including those

obtained through confidential review of others' manuscripts) or manipulation of authorship which could undermine the integrity of the research;

- Where unethical research has been reported; or
- Where an investigation uncovers evidence of systematic manipulation of the publishing process.

Cancer also permits authors to issue corrections. Articles may be corrected, for instance, if:

- Important content is incorrect or presented in such a way that the intent of the relevant section of the article is unclear;
- An error affects the interpretation of data or information presented in the article, but is not significant enough to impact the conclusions;
- Acknowledgements of funder support or non-author contributors have not been included, or declarations related to ethics approval or conflicts of interest need to be added; or
- The article's metadata (author list, title, etc.) is wrong, thereby affecting its discoverability on third-party abstracting and indexing sites.

This rigorous approach ensures that *Cancer* remains a trusted source of high-quality, reliable scientific information for the oncology community.

2. "How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?"

Cancer maintains rigorous standards to ensure the integrity and quality of the research it publishes. Manuscripts that fail to meet these standards are excluded from publication. Every author of every article submitted to *Cancer* must complete and sign a Conflict of Interest ("COI") Disclosure questionnaire, disclosing all financial and nonfinancial relationships that could be perceived as actual or potential COIs. This process is facilitated by Convey, a service provided by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), which allows authors to securely record and maintain their financial interests and disclosure history. To ensure transparency, the information disclosed during this process is included at the end of each published article in a mandatory Conflict of Interest Statement. Manuscripts that do not comply with these disclosure requirements or that present COIs that cannot be adequately managed are not considered for publication. Therefore, *Cancer*, through the process described above, does clearly articulate any relationships that might exist between supporters, funders, advertisers, or others and the published content.

3. “Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?”

Our goal is to provide a forum for the exchange of information relating to the treatment of human cancer—competing viewpoints are welcomed. Indeed, *Cancer* actively encourages the submission of competing viewpoints, recognizing that robust scientific discourse is essential for progress in oncology. Manuscripts that are novel, original, and have the potential for significant impact are especially likely to be selected for publication. As I mentioned, *Cancer* also affords authors the opportunity to appeal editorial decisions.

In addition to standard research articles and reviews, *Cancer* provides a platform for unique and differing perspectives through its Letters to the Editor section. These letters often offer critical commentary or alternative viewpoints in response to previously published articles. When a letter addresses a specific article, *Cancer* invites the author of the original work to submit a reply. Both the letter and the author’s response are then published together and are directly linked to the original article, facilitating transparent and constructive scientific dialogue. While letters to the editor are not subject to peer review, proper citation of sources is required to maintain scholarly standards.

Cancer publishes approximately one letter to the editor each week, reflecting its commitment to ongoing discussion and engagement within the oncology community.

4. “How do you assess the role played by government officials and funding organizations like the National Institutes of Health in the development of submitted articles?”

Government affiliation is not a relevant criteria to be published in *Cancer*. Like any institution, we welcome manuscripts from authors affiliated with government agencies. And like any other manuscript, those drafted by authors affiliated with government agencies are subject to our rigorous publication process—there are no exceptions.

5. “How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?”

As described previously, we investigate every credible allegation relating to the integrity and accuracy of our articles. Insofar as errors are identified, our post-publication correction process seeks to notify our readers accordingly.

6. “I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?”

Cancer does not consider individuals’ political, religious, or social beliefs; our sole focus is on scientific method and contributions that advance cancer research.

Cancer’s founding principle is to bring the best of science to the broadest possible audience. In recognition of the unfortunate reality that cancer has touched everyone in some way, the journal remains steadfast in its commitment to disseminating high-quality research and

knowledge that can inform, inspire, and ultimately improve outcomes for patients and families worldwide. By fostering a collaborative scientific community, *Cancer* strives to ensure that the latest advances reach all those affected by this disease, supporting progress in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care. I appreciate this opportunity to answer your questions and expand on the points you raised. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Dahut", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William "Bill" Dahut, MD
Chief Scientific Officer
American Cancer Society

CC: Wayne A. I. Frederick, MD

CC: Suresh S. Ramalingam, MD



American Cancer Society, Inc.
655 15th Street NW Suite 503
Washington, DC 20005
cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345



William Dahut, M.D.
Chief Scientific Officer

Every cancer. Every life.™

Via E-mail

May 2, 2025

U.S. Department of Justice
Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney, District of Columbia
Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear United States Attorney Martin:

I write in response to your letter dated April 14, 2025 addressed to Dr. Don Dizon regarding the content published in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* (“*CA Journal*”). As a scientist and as a clinician, I firmly believe in showing our work, and it is also through inquiry and response that the scientific and clinical communities continue to grow in rigor and transparency. Your inquiry reflects an interest in ensuring that publications of medical journals remain both evidence-based and patient-centered, which are two tenets that *CA Journal* fully embodies.

Published since 1950, *CA Journal* is one of the oldest and universally well-respected peer-reviewed oncology journals. As the flagship journal of the American Cancer Society (“ACS”), it provides cancer care professionals with up-to-date information on all aspects of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of human cancer—one of the leading causes of death worldwide. ACS is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service.

CA Journal focuses on keeping physicians and healthcare professionals informed by providing scientific and educational information in the form of comprehensive review articles on important cancer topics and issues that are significant to cancer care, along with publishing the latest cancer guidelines and statistical articles from ACS. It also retains the highest impact factor of all ISI-ranked journals—a metric used to evaluate the influence and prestige of academic journals.

CA Journal serves as a vital resource for a broad and diverse audience, including health professionals, patients, and advocates within the oncology community. The journal publishes authoritative information on cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment, as well as on related topics such as nutrition, palliative care, survivorship, and other aspects of comprehensive

cancer care. In addition, *CA Journal* welcomes proposals for high-impact randomized trials that have the potential to inform and shape standards of care.

The journal's readership encompasses a wide spectrum of medical professionals and researchers, including oncologists, oncology nurses, physician assistants, primary care physicians and nurse practitioners, general and surgical specialists, dermatologists, gastroenterologists, pulmonologists, radiologists, pathologists, epidemiologists, medical students, and basic science researchers amongst others. By offering free online access, *CA Journal* ensures that the latest advances and evidence-based practices in cancer care are accessible to all who seek to improve patient outcomes and advance the field.

Administrations across the political spectrum have relied on *CA Journal's* rigorous studies, epidemiological data, and oncological insights to inform decisions on healthcare funding, screening guidelines, and cancer prevention initiatives. Because the journal prioritizes scientific integrity over any particular viewpoint, it serves as a noncontroversial, science-based source of information that can be accessed to combat cancer and expand access to treatment.

The journal's team and structure are designed to ensure rigorous peer review and uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity and objectivity. The Editor-in-Chief is assisted by the Associate Editors, the ACS Advisory Council, and the Editorial Advisory Board. The journal's Editor-in-Chief was selected through a rigorous national search and is an internationally recognized leader in oncology. He works with the three Associate Editors who are world-renowned, internationally recognized leaders in their respective oncology specialties. Together, they represent various perspectives from the world's leading cancer centers, to include community practice in rural America—experience that informs the selection of authors and solicitation of high-quality articles, and that assures multi-perspective peer review. As the flagship journal of ACS, *CA Journal's* editorial board includes an ACS Advisory Council, which provides guidance and support to ensure the journal reflects the ACS mission and voice. Finally, the Editorial Advisory Board consists of experts who provide content feedback and reviewer recommendations to maintain the journal's scientific quality and relevance.

CA Journal is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes approximately fifty articles per year across six issues. Most articles are solicited by the editors, but around fifteen percent of published articles result from unsolicited proposals submitted by any author who desires to be published in *CA Journal*; all unsolicited proposals are carefully vetted by the Editor-in-Chief and/or Editorial Board for consideration.

The journal publishes a diverse range of article types to accommodate the breadth of research and scholarship in oncology. These article types are described as follows:

- **Review Articles:** A timely, in-depth treatment of an issue. Manuscripts of this type are typically 7,000 to 10,000 words, including references and tables. Articles on very rare cancer types and highly specialized information on individual drugs or procedures are generally not appropriate for *CA Journal*.

- ACS Statistics Articles: The ACS projects the number of new cancer cases and deaths expected each year in order to estimate the contemporary cancer burden. The regularly updated statistics articles present the most current trends in cancer occurrence and survival, as well as information on symptoms, prevention, early detection, and treatment. Specialized statistics on various cancer sites and populations are also issued.
- ACS Guidelines: The ACS issues a number of guidelines related to screening and informed decision-making about tests for early detection of many cancer sites as well as clinical follow-up care guidelines to help shape adult posttreatment cancer survivorship care.
- Phase III Randomized Trials: *CA Journal* recently began accepting for consideration prospective high-impact randomized trials. Authors submit a pre-submission query to the Editor-in-Chief consistent with our pre-submission requirements for all articles.
- Perspectives: Research in Context: A created content section designed specifically for busy clinicians and authored by a medical writer contracted through our publisher, Wiley. It covers a wide array of oncologic topics of interest to clinicians and features practical, concise information that is accompanied by insight from noted experts in the fields of cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.
- Virtual Tumor Board: Solicited cases are featured to highlight multidisciplinary dialogue regarding complex therapeutic decisions for patients and their providers across the spectrum of malignancies.
- Patient Pages: These condensed articles provide a concise summary of ACS guidelines and are written for patients and caregivers to address typical questions concerning cancer and its related symptoms, prevention, and treatment.

Most *CA Journal* articles are solicited. The Editor-in-Chief collaborates with the Associate Editors and Editorial Advisory Board to choose the topics for each issue. They identify cancer sites and topics that have seen advances in research and treatment and have not been recently published in *CA Journal*. Considered as the oncology journal for non-oncologists, we do not publish articles that are too advanced or specialized. Instead, we publish articles that are general, high-level, and appeal to a wide audience.

Once a topic for an issue is selected, the editorial team identifies authors who are objective experts in that field. In addition to identifying leaders from professional oncology associations and committees, the team utilizes public databases such as Web of Science and PubMed, a database of medical articles from the National Library of Medicine, to find authors who have a history of publishing on the topic. Our journal is a trusted source for readers with different levels of knowledge, so it is critical that our authors have the highest level of expertise.

Following the solicitation process, completed manuscripts are sent to the Editor-in-Chief for pre-review. This review is focused on readability and clarity to ensure that it is in near-final form prior to being sent for peer review. Peer review is an essential and mandatory step for any

manuscript that *CA Journal* publishes. During this phase, the manuscripts are sent to at least two peer reviewers, who are volunteers from the medical community and have the option to receive Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for their participation. The peer reviewers provide comments and feedback on the manuscripts. Most peer reviewers reach consensus on any necessary edits, but in the rare case that peer reviewers disagree, the editorial team solicits additional peer reviewers to conduct an added layer of review.

CA Journal operates under a single-anonymized peer review model: The author does not know the identities of the reviewers. The benefits of this model are that anonymity allows reviewers to be honest without fear of criticism from the author. Additionally, peer reviewers also alert the editors to any known conflicts of interest that the authors have failed to disclose. A manuscript may undergo multiple rounds of peer review and revision before it can be accepted. Only after a manuscript has been approved by the Editor-in-Chief, the Associate Editor managing peer review, and the peer reviewers themselves is a manuscript accepted and prepared for publication in *CA Journal*.

As the foregoing makes clear, *CA Journal* takes its role as a thought leader in the oncology space seriously and has built robust processes to guard against the specific concerns you raised in your letter. More specifically, however, please see our responses to your questions:

1. “How do you assess your responsibilities to protect the public from misinformation?”

As the flagship journal of ACS, *CA Journal* is deeply committed to publishing articles that meet the highest standards of scientific rigor and quality. The importance of our work cannot be overstated, as the articles we publish are read by experts and non-experts alike.

Through the solicitation process, *CA Journal* invites authors who are known, published, and objectively considered leading experts in their field. Authorship is earned through expertise. This high bar helps to ensure that the articles we publish meet exacting scientific standards.

Additionally, post-publication, *CA Journal* and its partner publisher Wiley follow comprehensive processes and procedures to address and correct errors in the published record. We thoroughly investigate every credible allegation concerning the integrity and accuracy of our articles. Upon receiving an allegation through a whistleblower, even if sent anonymously, the editorial team informs Wiley’s Integrity Assurance & Case Resolution Team for investigation and recommended resolution. When it is determined that the findings of a published article are unreliable, retractions are issued in accordance with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Retraction Guidelines. As outlined by Wiley, articles may be retracted if:

- There is major error which would invalidate the conclusions of the article, for example, where there is clear evidence that findings are unreliable, either as a result of misconduct (e.g., data fabrication) or honest error (e.g., misinterpretation,

miscalculation or experimental error) or a major conflict of interest which could have affected the interpretation of the research;

- Where the findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper cross-referencing, permission or justification (i.e., cases of redundant publication);
- Where there are ethical issues such as plagiarism (appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit including those obtained through confidential review of others' manuscripts) or manipulation of authorship which could undermine the integrity of the research;
- Where unethical research has been reported; or
- Where an investigation uncovers evidence of systematic manipulation of the publishing process.

CA Journal also permits authors to issue corrections. Articles may be corrected, for instance, if:

- Important content is incorrect or presented in such a way that the intent of the relevant section of the article is unclear;
- An error affects the interpretation of data or information presented in the article, but is not significant enough to impact the conclusions;
- Acknowledgements of funder support or non-author contributors have not been included, or declarations related to ethics approval or conflicts of interest need to be added; or
- The article's metadata (author list, title, etc.) is wrong, thereby affecting its discoverability on third-party abstracting and indexing sites.

This rigorous approach ensures that *CA Journal* remains a trusted source of high-quality, reliable scientific information for the oncology community.

2. "How do you clearly articulate to the public when you have certain viewpoints that are influenced by your ongoing relations with supporters, funders, advertisers, and others?"

CA Journal maintains rigorous standards to ensure the integrity and quality of the research it publishes. Manuscripts that fail to meet these standards are excluded from publication. Every author of every article published in *CA Journal* must complete and sign a Conflict of Interest ("COI") Disclosure questionnaire, disclosing all financial and nonfinancial relationships that could be perceived as actual or potential COIs. This process is facilitated by Convey, a service provided by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), which allows authors to securely record and maintain their

financial interests and disclosure history. To ensure transparency, the information disclosed during this process is included at the end of each published article in a mandatory Conflict of Interest Statement. Manuscripts that do not comply with these disclosure requirements or that present COIs that cannot be adequately managed are not considered for publication. Therefore, *CA Journal*, through the process described above, does clearly articulate any relationships that might exist between supporters, funders, advertisers, or others and the published content.

3. “Do you accept articles or essays from competing viewpoints?”

Our goal is to provide a forum for the exchange of information relating to the treatment of human cancer—competing viewpoints are welcomed. In addition to standard research articles, *CA Journal* provides a platform for unique and differing perspectives through our Letters to the Editor. Anyone may submit unsolicited letters to the editor in response to a published article. These are editorially reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are published if they satisfy the journal’s rigorous standards. Given that articles in *CA Journal* are generally in depth, long form articles, letters to the editor are less frequent.¹

4. “How do you assess the role played by government officials and funding organizations like the National Institutes of Health in the development of submitted articles?”

Government affiliation is not a relevant criteria to be published in *CA Journal*. Insofar as an author is affiliated with a government institution, that affiliation would be disclosed in the COI disclosure.

5. “How do you handle allegations that authors of works in your journals may have misled their readers?”

As described previously, we investigate every credible allegation relating to the integrity and accuracy of our articles. Given that *CA Journal* generally publishes comprehensive review articles rather than cutting-edge research, it is rare that corrections are needed. But insofar as errors are identified, our post-publication correction process seeks to notify our readers accordingly.

¹ For examples, see, e.g., Kacew, A.J. et al., Correspondence, *The case for catch-up human papillomavirus vaccination in at-risk populations: Rural communities and survivors of pediatric and young adult cancers*, 70 *CA Cancer J. Clin.* 518 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.21649>, disagreeing with Saslow, D. et al., *Human papillomavirus vaccination 2020 guideline update: American Cancer Society guideline adaptation*, 70 *CA Cancer J. Clin.*, 274 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.21616>; Gray, J.W., et al., Correspondence, *Increased cancer burden among pesticide applicators and others due to pesticide exposure*, 63 *CA Cancer J. Clin.* 364 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.21194>, disagreeing with Alavanja, M.C.R. et al., *Increased cancer burden among pesticide applicators and others due to pesticide exposure*, 63 *CA Cancer J. Clin.* 120 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.21170>.

6. “I am also interested to know if publishers, journals, and organizations with which you work are adjusting their method of acceptance of competing viewpoints. Are there new norms being developed and offered?”

CA Journal does not consider individuals’ political, religious, or social beliefs; our sole focus is on scientific method and contributions that advance cancer research.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Dahut", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William “Bill” Dahut, MD
Chief Scientific Officer
American Cancer Society

CC: Wayne A. I. Frederick, MD

CC: Don S. Dizon, MD



American Cancer Society, Inc.
655 15th Street NW Suite 503
Washington, DC 20005
cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345

May 2, 2025

Edward R. Martin, Jr., Esq.
U.S. Attorney, District of Columbia
U.S. Department of Justice
601 D Street, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Martin,

We are in receipt of your letter dated April 14, 2025, addressed to Sarina Schrager, MD, Editor in Chief of *Family Medicine*, requesting additional information from Family Medicine regarding various editorial practices. Please accept this letter as our response to your request.

Family Medicine (the “Journal”), an official journal of the nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(6) organization Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (“STFM”), aims to publish high-quality, original scholarship about education in family medicine and primary care. The Journal does not publish clinical research or clinical review articles.

Family Medicine is relied on by more than 6,000 family physicians, psychologists, sociologists, and public health specialists for the latest research and commentary on family medical education. The Journal publishes new editions monthly and sends its issues to subscribers via email. Neither the U.S. Mail nor any other commercial parcel service is used to distribute the Journal to subscribers.

Family Medicine employs a robust peer-review process to ensure that its journal’s content is of a high quality. The Journal’s Editor in Chief and one associate editor will first evaluate submissions generally to ensure that they are within the Journal’s scope. Afterward, several of the Journal’s more than 400 peer reviewers (and at least two independent reviewers with expertise in the paper’s subject matter) will provide detailed feedback and recommend revisions for the author’s consideration. The peer-review feedback is considered by the associate editor and Editor in Chief and shared with the author. Authors may be asked to submit a revised draft of their article. This process may be repeated to address additional issues in a submission. The Editor in Chief makes final decisions on what papers are accepted.

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The Journal accepts article proposals from a wide variety of viewpoints, provided that the topic of the article is within the Journal's scope. Articles are evaluated for their quality and originality; political considerations are not a part of the review process.

Family Medicine does not accept paid outside advertisements. The Journal is funded by STFM through membership dues. The Editor in Chief is given editorial independence to make decisions on what content to publish in the Journal, independent of STFM's leadership, and STFM's business goals do not influence the Journal's editorial process. Further, the Journal does not accept funding from the National Institutes of Health ("NIH") or any other government entity. Although some authors whose work is published in the Journal may receive NIH funding, such funding is not a consideration of the Journal's editorial process.

Although the Journal already publishes articles and essays from a broad range of viewpoints, the Journal also publishes pieces that compete with other published content. For example, we publish "letters to the editor" including opinions that contrast with the opinions presented in prior publications and allow authors the opportunity to respond to these letters in future publications. We also publish "counterpoint" features on controversial issues, in which we enlist authors with competing viewpoints to each present their opposing views in a single issue.

In our decades of publishing *Family Medicine*, we have never received an allegation that an author has misled readers. Since the Journal does not publish clinical research studies but publishes scholarship about the education of medical students and residents, we find that there are fewer incentives for our authors to mislead in a Journal article than may exist for clinical research published in other media, particularly when there are commercial implications for such research. Our peer-review process generally discards submissions that are not of a publishable quality, are not based on data, or which do not identify research methodology. If the Journal were to receive credible allegations of misconduct by authors, we would act quickly to investigate such allegations and take remedial action as needed. Any necessary corrections, retractions, and similar actions would be taken according to the Journal's existing policies.

The Journal follows, and will continue to follow, all applicable law regarding its publishing activity. As you know, this activity enjoys significant protection under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Although we are dedicated to publishing high-quality scholarship, which may include competing viewpoints, we reject your implication that we are compelled by law to publish such competing viewpoints or, for that matter, any other kind of content.

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If you have any further questions or require additional information, please direct your requests to STFM's counsel, Jeffrey Tenenbaum, Esq., at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

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Executive Director and CEO
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine

Cc: Jeffrey S. Tenenbaum, Esq., Managing Partner, Tenenbaum Law Group PLLC
Sarina Schrager, MD, MS, Editor in Chief, Family Medicine

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Student Representative
Samantha Busch

Science



U.S. Department of Justice
Edward R. Martin, Jr.
United States Attorney
District of Columbia

Patrick Henry Building
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Martin,

Thank you for reaching out to the *Science* family of journals. While *Science* disagrees that it is a “partisan[] ... in various scientific debates,” we welcome a discussion about the importance of open discourse. As our print journal masthead states, “*Science* serves as a forum for discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science by publishing material on which a consensus has been reached, as well as including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view.”

I discussed most of the questions raised in your letter last year with the U.S. House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, when I testified on April 16, 2024 in response to an [invitation](#)¹ from Chairman Wenstrup. During the hearing, I provided detailed information regarding the three sections of *Science* – peer-reviewed research, commentary and news – and illuminated the ability of the scientific method and *Science*’s peer review process to enable progress during the pandemic. My written testimony, with numerous links to relevant *Science* publications, can be found [on the Subcommittee's website](#)², and we have enclosed a copy here for your review.

As the hearing concluded, the Chairman reflected that it was designed “to better understand how articles and letters are published in these journals and what ... the process [is] so that the public can better understand the information before them...so that they can trust it and take it for face value.” I wrote in a *Science* [Editorial](#)³ that “I am pleased that the true nature of how science works—that it is a living work in progress—is now in the Congressional Record.”

At the *Science* family of journals, publishing research based on transparent methods and strong evidence is foundational to our work. The rigor of our multi-step peer review process is a central part of that commitment. *Science*’s editorial policies are publicly available on our website: <https://www.science.org/content/page/science-journals-editorial-policies>⁴.

Scientific progress is based on values – transparency, trust and rigor – that have been at the bedrock of *Science*’s publishing for generations. Trust in the scientific process and the independence and expertise it requires is especially critical. As I outlined in my testimony last

year, “Scientists are not and never will be perfect...But the scientific method enables us to reach beyond our individual limitations by requiring evidence and the freedom to change one’s mind in response to it... in the long-run, it converges on evidence-derived consensus that is as close to truth as possible in an imperfect world.”

We trust this letter, the enclosed testimony, and the material on the *Science* website satisfy your inquiries.

Sincerely,
Holden Thorp

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Holden Thorp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Editor-in-Chief, *Science* Family of Journals

1. <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024.04.16-HT-Invitation-SSCP.pdf>
2. <https://oversight.house.gov/hearing/academic-malpractice-examining-the-relationship-between-scientific-journals-the-government-and-peer-review/>
3. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adq2379>
4. <https://www.science.org/content/page/science-journals-editorial-policies>

Written Testimony of
Dr. Holden Thorp
Editor-in-Chief, *Science* Family of Journals
American Association for the Advancement of Science
Before the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic
U.S. House of Representatives
April 16, 2024

Chairman Wenstrup, Ranking Member Ruiz, and Members of the Select Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Holden Thorp, Editor-in-Chief of the *Science* family of journals. The *Science* family of journals is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), one of the largest multidisciplinary, non-profit scientific societies in the world. The mission of AAAS is to advance science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world for the benefit of all or — put more simply — to advance science and serve society.

I am a chemist by training with 40 years of experience as a researcher and administrator. For the past five years, I have had the best possible opportunity to observe the scientific publishing system at the *Science* family of journals.

Let me begin by saying how extraordinarily proud I am of the *Science* journals' work, including in the first year of the pandemic, when our team worked around the clock. Further, I am proud of the role the scientific enterprise plays in society writ large.

It is important to begin by noting that the journal *Science* is unlike most other publications in that it has three components, each of which operates independently. Each issue of *Science* covers scientific news, offers commentary about science, and publishes peer-reviewed research in many disciplines. As Editor-in-Chief, my role is different for each section. For the research journal, I oversee a staff of expert editors in different specialties. For news, I oversee award-winning coverage led by an editor and team of journalists that enjoy the same freedoms as any other media outlet in our country. Finally, as part of our commentary section, called Insights, I am an opinion writer who appears on the magazine's editorial page roughly every other week. Again, each of these three functions is independent from the others.

The peer review process is central to the scientific enterprise. For each research paper we handle at *Science*, we abide by a rigorous, multi-step peer review process that begins with staff editors who assess papers. These staff editors consult with expert colleagues and a board of external scientists. If a paper is determined to be potentially suitable for the journal, it is further evaluated by multiple reviewers who are researchers in related fields. This ensures that all aspects of a given study receive appropriate scrutiny. We also have a careful process to ensure that the reviewers do not have any conflicts of interest. Most studies that make it beyond these evaluations are revised and re-reviewed to ensure that all reviewer concerns have been adequately addressed. Then a paper is reviewed again by our staff editors who clarify language and images to make sure they are consistent with the evidence presented. If a paper makes it all the way through this process, it is then summarized, shared with more than 8,000 reporters under embargo, and posted on our website. Upon publication, it is maintained by us in perpetuity for any corrections or adjustments that happen after publication according to our well-established process.

This process was applied consistently to the nearly 9,000 research papers that *Science* family journal editors have reviewed related to SARS-CoV-2. It is applied to every paper, on every topic.

Regarding the paper at the center of this discussion, *The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2*, it was never submitted to *Science*. In fact, I had no knowledge of this piece, published in *Nature Medicine*, nor of the related letter in *The Lancet*, until they were published.

However, I want to call attention to three publications in *Science* that are relevant to today's discussion.

First, two separate papers, one led by virologist Michael Worobey and another led by virologist Jonathan Pekar, were published in the research section of *Science* in 2022. This research has been heavily scrutinized – as is a typical part of the post-publication process – but this research still stands (see [here](#) and [here](#)). These papers present geospatial and genetic information that supports, but does not conclusively prove, the theory of natural origin for SARS-CoV-2. Both were posted on the internet, on preprint servers, prior to submission to *Science*. It is not uncommon for researchers to post early drafts of research as preprints to encourage community feedback and improve their work. Indeed, these papers were widely read and reported on at the preprint stage. When they were later submitted to *Science*, they were subjected to our full peer review process. At the end of the process, they were edited under my supervision to ensure that the language was consistent with the extent to which the evidence presented was supportive, but not dispositive, of natural origin. We made these changes because we felt that lab origin was still a possibility. The final published papers' more limited conclusions better reflect the data and evidence presented. To be clear, no government officials prompted or participated in the review or editing of the Worobey or Pekar papers.

We have indicated before, and I want to underscore it here, that any papers supporting the lab origin theory would go through the very same processes. Period. *Science* works by a system that enables people to challenge consensus, a point I've [emphasized](#). Any paper that seeks to challenge consensus follows a path available to all: submit a paper to a journal, undergo multi-step peer review, share relevant data and methodology, and have many people look at the data to see if it really does disprove the consensus. If it does, that paper can be published. In fact, the few papers that genuinely do this are rightly celebrated, and journals like *Science* compete to get them in their pages.

With respect to commentary we publish, we invite open discourse in our journals. For example, we published a [letter](#) in our commentary section in May 2021 from prominent researchers in the area of COVID-19 origins, led by virologist Jesse Bloom. This letter called for a thorough investigation of the possibility of a lab origin of COVID-19. When we published it, I wrote in an accompanying blog that “good science requires that the laboratory escape idea be rigorously investigated before being ruled out. China should allow for a dispassionate examination of the data and allow scientists to do what they are trained to do. I thank the Letter writers for their contribution and hope their words will be heeded.” I stand firmly by this sentiment today.

That letter ushered in a new era of consideration and debate on COVID-19 origins. That was important. We were intentional in this publication, as letters are some of the only material in *Science* that do not go through peer review. Rather, they are published at our discretion. We evaluate letters at the time they are submitted, in the context of the current state of the field. As our print journal masthead notes: *Science* serves as a forum for discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science by publishing material on which a consensus has been reached, as well as including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view.

In 2021, in addition to publishing the Bloom letter, which has been mentioned in [hundreds](#) of news stories globally, *Science* also hosted a [video conversation](#) exploring origin theories. We invited scientists from both sides of the debate. Our guests were Alina Chan (Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard), Jesse Bloom (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute), Michael Worobey (University of Arizona), and Linfa Wang (Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore). Later that year, we published a [Policy Forum](#) by members of Former President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. It advocated for a non-partisan U.S. COVID-19 commission to examine the pandemic outbreak and recommend steps to ensure the U.S. responds more effectively in future epidemics. *Science* has also published commentary by both Dr. Francis Collins, then-Director of the National Institutes of Health, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, then-Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. During the Trump Administration, both Collins and Fauci were authors on a [Policy Forum](#) on COVID-19 vaccine research and development.

For my part as the Editor-in-Chief at *Science*, one of my jobs is to populate our Editorial page, which is clearly marked as opinion. I write with the scientific community in mind. I don't shy away from topics that, while sensitive, could benefit a broader discourse between scientists and society at large. This was equally true during the COVID-19 pandemic. I pointed out my thoughts on failings by multiple officials. Just one month after the pandemic took the world by storm, in late February 2020, I wrote an [editorial](#) criticizing China's secrecy on the coronavirus. I wrote at that time, "We will never be able to better handle future public health crises without learning lessons from previous experiences. And if every experience is shrouded in secrecy, enforced by a repressive government, then we will never solve this problem." I stand firmly by this sentiment today.

In April 2023, when the world still lacked access to raw data on early COVID-19 cases in China, an [editorial](#) on our pages by World Health Organization leader Maria D. Van Kerkhove called on China yet again – urging China "to share any data on the origins of SARS-CoV-2, immediately."

The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic has highlighted emails I've exchanged with federal officials, including Drs. Fauci and Collins, during the pandemic. These emails were friendly. There are also editorials I've written that are critical of these leaders. Another [piece](#) was critical of President Biden.

The third part of our magazine is our news division. The reporters who work for News from *Science* focus on topics that appeal to people who are actively involved in science, and I never tell them what to cover, or how. Their reporting spans many sides of given issues, which was true from the start of the pandemic. They reported as early as [January 2020](#) that a lab may have been a possibility for the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

To this point, I've felt it important to respond to points of concern laid out by the Subcommittee. I also want to acknowledge that *Science* and science more broadly did not navigate this global pandemic perfectly. I've previously [highlighted](#) missteps by researchers and funding agencies during COVID-19. I've [talked](#) extensively about scientists as flawed human beings, all with our inherent biases.

Of course, I am no different. My opinions have been on full display, including in editorials. I know some people don't like this. But just as was true for editorials by Editors-in-Chief before me, these pieces exist to inspire and provoke dialogue on issues that matter to our primary audience: the scientific community. These pieces are always clearly marked as commentary and do not change or influence the peer review processes for the research we publish.

Everyone has opinions, biases, and flaws. Some are upfront about them and others keep them to themselves. Of course, scientists are not and never will be perfect. We are human. But the scientific method enables us to reach beyond our individual limitations by requiring evidence and constant self-correction. It helped us end the pandemic, and it contributes to a strong and prosperous America.

An idea that is inherent in science, and something we take for granted, is that science is a work in progress. For the *Science* family of journals, where we are always striving to improve, we could have more clearly said during the pandemic, “This is what we know now, and it might change.” I shared reflections on how we could help young people studying science better articulate this reality in a recent [editorial](#).

It’s important to recognize this and work to improve how we engage and communicate ahead of the next great societal challenge. Because there will be a next great societal challenge. I’m a big believer in looking mistakes in the eye and responding. It’s something I’ve been [trying to encourage](#) the scientific community to do more quickly and transparently.

In closing, I want to recognize the scientific community and my colleagues at the *Science* family of journals for their roles during the COVID pandemic. We did not get everything right during COVID-19 – no one did. But in 18 months, the scientific community identified the virus, determined how it spreads, and developed therapies that have had major, life-saving impact. Scientists, the scientific method, and peer review are national treasures, and I am thankful every day for all three.

Holden Thorp, Ph.D.

Dr. Thorp became Editor-in-Chief of the *Science* family of journals on 28 October 2019. He also holds faculty appointments in chemistry and medicine at The George Washington University. He came to *Science* from Washington University in St. Louis, where he was provost and Rita Levi-Montalcini Distinguished University Professor from 2013 to 2019. He joined Washington University after spending three decades at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), where he served as the 10th chancellor from 2008 to 2013.

A North Carolina native, Dr. Thorp started at UNC as an undergraduate student and earned a bachelor of science degree in chemistry in 1986. He earned a doctorate in chemistry in 1989 at the California Institute of Technology. He holds an honorary doctor of laws degree from North Carolina Wesleyan College, is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Academy of Inventors.

Dr. Thorp is the coauthor, with Buck Goldstein, of two books on higher education: [Engines of Innovation: The Entrepreneurial University in the Twenty-First Century](#) and [Our Higher Calling: Rebuilding the Partnership Between America and its Colleges and Universities](#), both from UNC Press.

[EXTERNAL] Response From Scientific American
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Dear Mr. Martin:

I am responding to your letter dated April 14, 2025.

Founded in 1845, Scientific American is the oldest continuously published magazine in the U.S. and the leading consumer magazine for science and technology in the general media. As part of our core mission, Scientific American covers wide-ranging discoveries and trends in science, health, technology, the environment and society. Scientific American is not an academic journal. As a result, Scientific American's main fare is not articles written by scientists engaged in government-funded studies. Rather, the magazine is committed to enhancing the general public's understanding of the scientific world.

Scientific American takes accuracy seriously and periodically issues corrections in the unusual circumstance when a material error is identified.

Scientific American's content, including its choice of articles, is fully protected by the First Amendment. The magazine has long elected to cover a wide range of topics and competing perspectives. In response to your letter, let me state clearly that the magazine's editorial team does not advocate for positions due to advertisements or sponsorship. Moreover, when our advertisers run sponsored content on our platforms, it is clearly labeled as such.

While Scientific American provides the above information on a voluntary basis in response to your letter, it reserves all rights.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Lau

Kimberly Lau

President, Scientific American

1 New York Plaza, Suite 4600, New York, NY, 10004-1562, USA



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