

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE *BC MEDICAL JOURNAL*

While today's *BCMJ* looks radically different from its earlier incarnation of 50 years ago and is produced on a fully electronic workflow, if you look below the surface you find that the journal's goals, editorial oversight, and staffing remain essentially unchanged.

**F**irst published in 1959, the *British Columbia Medical Journal* has entered its 50th year of publication. Throughout its half-century of existence, the journal has chronicled the evolution of the medical profession and documented amazing advances in medical science. Through editorial continuity over the years, the journal has maintained its scientific relevance, upheld a high standard of publishing excellence, and preserved an objective that existed at its inception: "...to strengthen the ideals of unity and organization among members of the profession."

The history of the *BCMJ* stretches back much further than the half-century it has spent in its current incarnation. The roots of the journal originate with the *Vancouver Medical Association Bulletin*, which began publishing

in October 1924. In its 34 years of publication, the circulation of the *Bulletin* grew from approximately 700 to 2680, with subscribers in the UK, India, and South America, in addition to Canada and the US.

In 1957, as advertising revenues dropped, the *Bulletin* ceased to be profitable for the VMA, and a committee was formed of representatives from the VMA, the BCMA, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC to discuss the future of the publication. The committee decided to rename the publication the *British Columbia Medical Journal*, and an agreement was struck wherein the VMA would own the publication, the editor would receive a salary, and the BCMA would pay for space within its pages.

The first issue of the *BC Medical Journal* was published in January 1959, and although the publication has flourished over time, the original arrangement ultimately did not work out. Over the next few years advertising revenues continued to drop, and in January 1963 the BC Medical Association, anxious to have its own publication, took ownership of the journal.

The ownership and management of the journal by the BC Medical Association brought about many changes to the image of the publication. After four decades of small-page publication, in January 1968 the journal switched to a full-size format with standard page measures. In 1973 the journal adopted a new format, casting off the formal image of previous decades and displaying a new look and logo.