



## Dr. Berman, AAP past president, dies at 76

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AAP Past President Stephen Berman, M.D., FAAP, of Denver, died Jan. 17 at age 76 after a battle with lymphoma. During his career, he was dedicated to underserved children in Colorado and around the world, and was an advocate for child health financing.

While president of the Academy in 2000-'01, he championed the MediKids Health Insurance Act, which aimed to create a federal health care program for every U.S. child, providing comprehensive, age-appropriate benefits in a medical home. He also served as the Academy's vice president in 1999, president of the Colorado Chapter (1993-'95) and chair of the Committee on Child Health Financing in 1994.

"We worked closely together as committee chairs in the 90s and have stayed close ever since," said James M. Perrin, M.D., FAAP, chair of the Committee on Child Health Financing and AAP past president (2014).

"He has been a source of tremendously helpful experience and advice over the years (within the) AAP and global health and on child health financing. ... He also had an outsized role in Colorado — teacher, mentor, advocate, program developer — and many Colorado pediatricians serve as his legacy. He was a great man, a great leader and a good friend."

Dr. Berman earned his B.A. at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., and completed his M.D. at Temple University Medical School in Philadelphia. At age 34, he became the youngest section head of general academic pediatrics at Children's Hospital Colorado and University of Colorado School of Medicine. He led the section from 1981-'89 and 1998-2007. As a practicing physician, Dr. Berman provided primary care for children with special health care needs.

"He cared for each child he saw in the clinical setting in a way that made it clear that this patient and this family was the most important in the world," said Stephen R. Daniels, M.D., Ph.D., FAAP, chair of the Department of Pediatrics at University of Colorado School of Medicine and pediatrician-in-chief at Children's Hospital Colorado. "He made complex medical concepts simple for parents to understand, which helped them make difficult medical decisions. I remember him telling the mother of a newborn that starting school was like the Super Bowl for the child and their job was to work together over the next several years to be sure the child was ready to be a star in the Super Bowl of school."

Dr. Berman was known for wearing a bow tie, of which he had an extensive collection.

"My research study as chief resident involved looking into babies' ears, but regular ties always got in the way so I switched to wearing bow ties," Dr. Berman said in a 2000 *AAP News* interview.

A leader in child advocacy and child health financing and policy, Dr. Berman wrote four textbook editions of pediatric algorithms titled *Pediatric Decision Making* and authored the book *Getting it Right for Children: Stories of Pediatric Care and Advocacy*. He also worked in migrant and community health centers and hospital clinics in the United States and South America, including a two-year stay in Cali, Colombia, to lead a research program on case management of acute respiratory infections. He later served as an international consultant for the World Health Organization in India, Egypt, the Philippines and throughout Latin America.

"Steve Berman was a visionary and a gifted innovator," said former AAP CEO/Executive Director (2004-'15) Errol R. Alden, M.D., FAAP. He contributed ideas on finance, quality improvement and merging World Health Organization and AAP standards related to newborn resuscitation to have a unified approach, Dr. Alden added. "Steve was a personal friend I could always turn to for solid advice."

In 2011, he was appointed director of the Center for Global Health at the Colorado School of Public Health, a position he held until his death.

The many accolades Dr. Berman received include the James Strain Community Service Award from the Colorado Chapter (2000), the Bridge to the Future Innovation in Education Award from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (1998), the James Strain Golden Apple Award for Community Service from Children's Hospital Colorado (1995) and the Philippine National Pediatric Society Award (1992).

"Steve was the most generous pediatrician there was with his time, expertise and connections," said Christopher Stille, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, head of general academic pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. "No problem was too difficult for him. He would solve it or connect you with someone who could with his vast network of ideas and people. His dedication to underserved children in Colorado, the United States and around the world was the hallmark of his career. We will miss him so, so much."

Dr. Berman is survived by his wife, Elaine, sons, Seth and Ben, and two grandchildren.

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