



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

AAP News

In Memoriam: Dr. Cooper was 'tremendous advocate' for AAP mission

by Trisha Koriath, Staff Writer



Louis Z. Cooper, M.D., FAAP, of New York, dedicated his career to making sure children born everywhere had a chance to live, grow and thrive. The AAP past president (2001-'02) died of pancreatic cancer Oct. 3. He was 87.

Dr. Cooper is remembered as a pioneer who helped families affected by rubella and lifelong complications of congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).

"He was one of the greatest child health advocates, a tremendous advocate who took vaccines globally, and had contacts in every village of the world," said District III Chair Margaret C. Fisher, M.D., FAAP, who worked with Dr. Cooper on global pediatric immunization efforts. "The biggest thing we could do to honor him would be to get rid of rubella throughout the world and get rubella vaccine into every country."

Inspired to pursue medicine by his family physician and an internist uncle, Dr. Cooper originally dreamed of becoming a cardiac surgeon but landed in internal medicine early in his career. His heart drew him to pediatrics.

While studying penicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* as an intern and resident in Boston after serving in the Air Force, Dr. Cooper was contacted by a physician colleague who had isolated the rubella virus. The world was experiencing a rubella pandemic. In the U.S. alone, 20,000 babies were affected by CRS in 1964-'65.

Dr. Cooper joined the laboratory at New York University at Bellevue Hospital Center to research rubella and work toward development of a vaccine, which later was developed by federal regulators.

The laboratory was the only one in the area with new technology to isolate the rubella virus and measure antibodies. It was called on to help pregnant women with rash illness and possible disease.

As a young internist, Dr. Cooper saw hundreds of mothers and babies with CRS. Unable to simply study the disease without helping the families whose lives were forever affected, he began to pursue his calling in pediatrics.

Studying the rubella outbreak and lasting effects, Dr. Cooper established the clinical definition, features and health impacts of CRS.

In 1965, he started and served as director of the Rubella Project, with initial funding from a March of Dimes grant and public health department support. The clinic delivered medical and psychosocial care to 300 patients with CRS in the first year. The project evolved into a multidisciplinary medical, educational and social service entity.



There, he met his wife, Madeline Appell, an infant auditory training program teacher who helped build the Rubella Project. Partnering with education advocates, they pushed for support services. Laws passed in New York later served as examples for a federal special education law.

Dr. Cooper also was a strong advocate behind the New York children's health insurance program, a precursor to the federal Children's Health Insurance Program.

In addition to serving as president, Dr. Cooper held numerous leadership roles in the Academy, including District II chair, New York Chapter 3 chair and a member of the AAP Committee on Child Health Financing and Task Force on Pediatric AIDS. Later, he served as the AAP liaison to the International Pediatric Association. He also worked as a senior adviser of the Measles & Rubella Initiative, a global eradication project supported by the Academy.

Dr. Cooper had a keen ability to sense impending legislative issues important to the AAP, said CEO/Executive Vice President Mark Del Monte, J.D. "He would call just at the right moment to give just the right advice about a very key issue affecting the needs of children."

He also was a national pioneer and world leader in addressing patient, family and pediatric education needs for early hearing detection and intervention, said AAP Chief Medical Officer/Senior Vice President Fan Tait, M.D., FAAP.

"He was a remarkable pediatric advocate. For a leader of his stature, he was always inclusive, humble and a wonderful mentor to so many of us," she said.

Born during the Great Depression, Dr. Cooper went to school in Akron, Ohio, and spent summers with family in Georgia. He often remarked that witnessing poverty and racism in the Deep South made a lasting impression on him.

In a 2014 oral history (<http://bit.ly/DrCooperOralHistory>), Dr. Cooper called for pediatricians to continue making decisions based on the best interests of children. "There have to be some people who are trying to work for a value system which is the value system that the Academy has had since it began."

Dr. Cooper earned his M.D. from Yale University School of Medicine (1957), completed an internship at Massachusetts Memorial Hospital, Boston (1958) and residency at Boston Veteran's Administration Hospital (1959). His first wife predeceased him. He is survived by his second wife, Madeline Appell, four children and grandchildren.

Additional deaths

Margaret M. Bouffard, M.D., FAAP, of Telford, Pa., died Aug. 27 at age 66.

Thomas A. Clark, M.D., FAAP, of New Hartford, N.Y., died Aug. 31 at age 88.

William F. Harrell Jr., M.D., North Carolina Chapter Affiliate, of Elizabeth City, N.C., died Sept. 2 at age 101.

Murray M. Kappelman, M.D., FAAP, of Pikesville, Md., died Jan. 25 at age 87.

Richard Saul, M.D., FAAP, of Chicago, died of a heart attack at age 83.

Robert Snowe, M.D., FAAP, of Seaford, N.Y., died Aug. 21 at age 81.



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