



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VA Pittsburgh Physician receives 2020 David M. Worthen Rising Star Award**

Dr. Deborah DiNardo, director of Women’s Health and an internist at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, received the 2020 Worthen Rising Star Award, recognizing her as an early career champion of health professions trainee education.

The David M. Worthen Awards are the highest honor given by the Veterans Health Administration for outstanding achievements in health professions education.

DiNardo is a local and national leader in educating medical students early in improving clinical reasoning and reducing diagnostic errors. This important instructional area impacts all patient care. Under DiNardo’s direction, it includes conferences that introduce the clinical reasoning concept; an online curriculum; and an elective on enhancing reasoning skills in preparation for residency training.

“Clinical reasoning is something we’re doing all the time every day,” said DiNardo, an O’Hara Township resident. “To approach it from a more deliberate standpoint is very important.”

DiNardo developed an interest in clinical reasoning and reducing diagnostic errors – a field of focus that is now exploding – while she was completing her master’s degree in medical education at the University of Pittsburgh. It was the focus of her master’s project.

“I’m a real believer in the philosophy that starting this training very early in medical school is important,” she said, adding incorporating training in how students think as physicians is important in the way they approach patients and their problems.

DiNardo has spread clinical-reasoning education across the health care professional trainee spectrum. She has led efforts to develop, implement and evaluate curricula within the internal medicine residency program, and has disseminated her work nationally via presentations at national meetings and with multiple peer-reviewed publications. She was also awarded the

Sheldon Adler Award for Innovation in Medical Education and the Clinical Educator of the Year Award from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in 2020.

The award program was established in 1988 and named after the late Dr. David M. Worthen, former head of academic affairs, board-certified ophthalmologist, established academician, surgeon, researcher and inspirational leader of VA's education mission.

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### **About VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System**

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) is one of the largest and most progressive VA health care systems in the nation. More than 4,000 employees serve nearly 80,000 veterans every year, providing a range of services from complex transplant medicine to routine primary care. VAPHS is a leader in virtual care delivery through telehealth technology; a center of research and learning with 116 research investigators and \$17 million in funding; and a provider of state-of-the-art health care training to some 1,500 student trainees annually. VAPHS provides care at medical centers in Oakland and O'Hara Township in Pennsylvania and five outpatient clinics in Belmont County, Ohio, and Beaver, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania. Veterans can call 412-360-6993 or 412-822-2040 to check eligibility or enrollment. Stay up to date at [pittsburgh.va.gov](http://pittsburgh.va.gov) and [facebook.com/VAPHS](https://facebook.com/VAPHS)