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VA recognizes 2020 Worthen Award winners for excellence in health professions education

WASHINGTON – Three health care professionals at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) were recognized today for their role in improving quality and timely care for Veterans by enhancing education and training programs.

The 2020 winners of the [David M. Worthen Awards for Excellence in Health Professions Education](#) received recognition in three categories: Rising Star, Innovator and overall Career Achievement.

“Each year, over 120,000 trainees in more than 40 clinical disciplines such as pharmacists, social workers, physician assistants and nurse practitioners complete training in VA facilities,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Nearly 70% of physicians and 60% of psychologists in the U.S. have received training at VA. These educators are making tremendous contributions in teaching the next generation of health care professionals across the country.”

This year’s Rising Star Award was presented to Deborah DiNardo, MD, MS, director of Women’s Health at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System for developing a conference series that introduces clinical reasoning concepts to medical students to reduce patient care errors.

The Innovator Award was presented to David Topor, PhD, MS-HPed, associate director of Healthcare Professional Education at the VA Boston Healthcare System, for creating and leading a nationwide in-person and virtual VA faculty development program to enhance effective teaching skills across multiple professions in VA. The program allows clinical staff in rural locations to receive training without travel, maximizing their patient care and training time.

The Career Achievement Award was presented to Joyce Wipf, MD, MACP, section chief for general internal medicine at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle for creating the Resident as Teacher curriculum. The course has prepared second-year medical residents for their role as educators and leaders in numerous institutions across the country over the last 28 years. Wipf was also recognized for her work spearheading the creation of Seattle’s Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Center of Excellence in Primary Care, an interprofessional training program that teaches trainees from multiple disciplines to work together in integrated teams to meet the full spectrum of Veteran care needs. The Seattle Center of Excellence was established in collaboration with the University of Washington Schools of Medicine and Nursing.

VA’s Office of Academic Affiliations oversees the Worthen Awards, along with the nation’s largest education and training program for health professionals in the U.S., working in partnership with 99% of the country’s medical schools and more than 1,800 colleges and universities including schools in the allied health professions.

Learn more about VA’s mission of training health care professionals at [VA Office of Academic Affiliations](#).

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