

Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award



The Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award honors designated institutional officials (DIOs) who have demonstrated excellence in overseeing residency and fellowship programs at their Sponsoring Institutions. DIOs have authority and responsibility for all graduate medical education (GME) programs in a teaching hospital, community hospital, or other type of institution that sponsors GME programs.



Deborah M. DeMarco, MD, FACP

University of Massachusetts Medical School
Worcester, Massachusetts

Nominators had this to say:

“Dr. DeMarco has been the leading voice and advocate for promoting and protecting the interests of our trainees. She is directly responsible for launching and leading profoundly important initiatives focused on our GME learning environment and resident wellness. Her unwavering commitment to holding our residents and UMMS faculty to our institutional Standards of Respect—a gold standard for professional and humanistic behavior by all present in the learning environment—has resulted in positive change in culture

within our teaching hospital. She has overseen the development of resident wellness programming, including increased access to mental health providers and enhanced communication channels with residents to ensure frequent feedback. Dr. DeMarco's stellar efforts in this area positioned our institution to receive the DeWitt C. Baldwin, Jr. Award from the ACGME and the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, as an “exemplar of humanistic and respectful environments for medical education.”

“Her contributions to the UMMS learning environment have been especially impactful in the area of Interprofessional Education (IPE). She has spearheaded the creation of the Interprofessional Trainee Quality Council (ITQC), a remarkably effective endeavor, which pairs GME trainees with nurses from UMass Memorial Medical Center and advanced practice nursing students. Moreover, Dr. DeMarco has been an engaged member of the Liaison Committee for Interprofessional Curriculum (LCIC), an institutional body established to coordinate the work of our curriculum committees. The LCIC's efforts has resulted in numerous successful IPE initiatives, including our Opioid Safe Prescribing Training Immersion (OSTI) Program, which received the AAMC Curricular Innovation Award and employs simulation, standardized patients, and patient panels in a fully interprofessional experience to ensure our future health care professionals are trained in pain management and the prevention of drug misuse.”