

Thomas E. Norris, MD, FAAFP, receives 2010 John G. Walsh Award



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Tom Norris, MD, vice dean for academic affairs, professor of family medicine and adjunct professor of medical education at the University of Washington in Seattle, was honored for winning the 2010 John G. Walsh Award by the American Academy of Family Physicians at its annual meeting here. Established in 1973, the John G. Walsh Award is one of the highest honors bestowed by the AAFP. Designed to recognize long-term commitment, rather than any single significant contribution, the Walsh Award is given on the basis of dedicated, effective leadership toward furthering the development of family medicine. The Walsh Award is not an annual award, but is given at the discretion of the AAFP Board of Directors. The late Dr. John Walsh, for whom the award is named, devoted his career to family medicine. He distinguished himself by becoming the first individual ever to hold the presidency of three major family medicine organizations: the AAFP, the American Board of Family Medicine and the Family Health Foundation of America, now the AAFP Foundation.

Norris was honored for his invaluable contributions to the advancement of family medicine and for a lifetime of service to his patients and students. For 10 years, Norris provided care to patients in rural Montana, where he also helped develop the Montana Family Practice Satellite Residency Program. He then joined the faculty of Tacoma Family Medicine where he served as residency director and established the first Fellowship in Rural Family Medicine. Tacoma Family Medicine is nationally recognized for training residents who plan to work in rural communities.

In 1993, Norris joined the faculty of the University of Washington as Assistant Dean for Regional Affairs and Rural Health. He played a major role in adding Wyoming to WWAMI, a partnership between the University of Washington School of Medicine and the states of Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. WWAMI provides access to publicly supported medical education across the five-state region. Norris also was instrumental in establishing the UW Physicians Network, the University of Washington's network of community – based primary care clinics. He continues to practice and teach family medicine. His research efforts have centered on rural practice and the education of rural family physicians as well as the use of telemedicine and medical informatics in primary care.