

Contact: Graham Short, WSMA Director of Communications 206.956.3633
gfs@wsma.org

Washington State Medical Association's 2025 Apple Awards Recognize Member Physicians, Others for Service to Patients and Profession

Sixth annual awards program honors recipients during the association's annual House of Delegates meeting in Bellevue this September.

SEATTLE (Sept. 22, 2025) – Three physicians and two health care organizations have been recognized by the Washington State Medical Association, the state's largest physician professional association, for extraordinary leadership, service, and contributions to medicine and patient safety. These recognitions were part of the WSMA Apple Awards program, named after a symbol of good health and one of Washington state's most popular agricultural exports, presented during the opening session of the 2025 Annual Meeting of the WSMA House of Delegates on Saturday, Sept. 20 at The Westin Bellevue.

Two WSMA physician members received 2025 Grassroots Advocate Awards, honoring physicians for their advocacy efforts on behalf of WSMA's legislative priorities: **Tamara Chang, DO**, medical director of physician and advanced practice practitioner wellness for MultiCare Health System and a pediatric oncologist at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital in Tacoma, for her efforts supporting the passage of House Bill 1718 during the 2025 legislative session to ensure confidentiality protections for physician wellness programs; and **Andrea Kalus, MD**, a dermatologist at the University of Washington Medical Center–Roosevelt and a UW associate professor of dermatology and medicine, for her efforts helping the WSMA to oppose inappropriate scope of practice legislation, supporting the Medicaid Access Program in House Bill 1392, and supporting the confidentiality protections in physician wellness programs in House Bill 1718.

The 2025 Community Advocate Award was presented to the **Washington Serious Illness Care Coalition**, an all-volunteer multidisciplinary committee within the WSMA dedicated to helping patients, physicians, clinicians, and caregivers improve the way we discuss, prepare for, and treat serious illness. Starting life as the Washington End-of-Life Consensus Coalition in the 1990s, for nearly three decades the WSICC helped nurture the field of advanced care planning in Washington state, a mission that encompassed both the Portable Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment and the WSMA advance directive, helping to improve their utilization through professional education and fine-tuning of these critical forms. The work of these passionate advocates over the years has helped to ensure that Washingtonians facing serious illness today are treated with dignity, respect, and have a voice in their care.

Named after the late WSMA Past President William O. Robertson, MD, a champion for patient safety, risk management, and quality improvement, the 2025 William O.

Robertson, MD, Patient Safety Award, which recognizes innovative patient safety initiatives in the ambulatory care setting, was awarded to **UW Medicine Primary Care**. The ambulatory primary care network was recognized for its efforts to implement QI-protected virtual monthly morbidity and mortality conferences for cases in the clinical network. By creating a formal CME structure for the “M&Ms,” they created a culture that encourages a learning environment around safety issues.

Finally, the 2024 President’s Unsung Hero Award, which recognizes the WSMA member who contributes extraordinary service to the profession and our community, was presented to **Frank Senecal, MD**, an oncologist and former chief of staff at St. Joseph’s and St. Francis Hospitals, chair of the department of medicine at St. Francis Hospital, and medical director of Hospice of Tacoma. For nearly 40 years, Dr. Senecal has served the Tacoma community with dedication, quietly transforming cancer care in the South Sound region through his compassionate patient care, groundbreaking research initiatives, and steadfast commitment to medical excellence. In 1985, he founded Hematology Oncology Northwest, which later evolved into Northwest Medical Specialties, nurturing the group into a highly respected oncology practice. Dr. Senecal also established the South Sound CARE Foundation, an organization that has given local cancer patients access to life-changing clinical trials that would otherwise be unavailable in the region. His lifelong contributions to medicine and his selfless service to patients, colleagues, and the broader community make him an outstanding and truly deserving recipient of the President’s Unsung Hero Award.

Visit the WSMA website for photos of the honorees receiving their awards at the 2025 WSMA Annual Meeting.

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About the Washington State Medical Association

The Washington State Medical Association represents approximately 13,500 physicians, resident physicians, physician assistants, and medical students across all specialties and practice types in Washington state. The WSMA has advocated on behalf of the house of medicine for more than 135 years. Our vision is to make Washington state the best place to practice medicine and receive care.