North Carolina Doctor Named 2016 Family Physician of the Year
Concord family physician recognized for dedication to patients, community and future physicians

DENVER -- The American Academy of Family Physicians has given its highest honor to a family physician whose journey into medicine was anything but typical. Maureen E. Murphy, MD, began her career in journalism and public relations, but today she was named the AAFP’s national 2016 Family Physician of the Year. The award honors one outstanding American family physician who provides patients with compassionate, comprehensive care, and serves as a role model in his or her community and to other health professionals. She accepted the award during the AAFP’s annual meeting, the Family Medicine Experience.

Murphy began her career as a television reporter in Joplin, Missouri, in the early 1970s, and later became a public relations professional in the Kansas City area. It was in 1978, while working as a public relations specialist for the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, that she discovered her life calling to become a family physician. As she researched and wrote about the specialty of family medicine, she developed such a strong belief in its tenets that it motivated her to change careers. She re-enrolled in college to complete the necessary science courses, took the Medical College Admission Test, and was accepted at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. Determined to become a family physician, Murphy graduated in 1985 with her medical degree and an award for Outstanding Student in Family Practice.

Murphy’s lasting legacy to family medicine centers on her gift as a talented teacher and mentor to medical students and the next generation of family physicians. Throughout her almost 30 years of practice, she has touched the lives of nearly 200 residents and more than 1,000 medical students. Many have chosen careers in family medicine as a result of her passion and enthusiasm for the specialty.

Throughout her career, Murphy has established herself as a highly respected, clinically adept and dependable source of care for thousands of patients. Most importantly, at a time when the United States faces a primary care physician shortage, her leadership contributions and passion for teaching have inspired many young people to learn about the role of organized medicine in medical education. Murphy’s leadership through the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians, including a term as president, resulted in the establishment of several key programs aimed at developing the leadership skills of medical students and residents. This has helped to bolster interest in primary care and had a direct impact on patients’ access to care.

Murphy was born and raised in Pittsburg, Kansas. It was her acceptance into the Duke University Family Medicine Residency Program that brought her to North Carolina where she has remained since completing residency in 1988. Following residency, she became a clinical instructor at the East Carolina School of Medicine Family Practice Center in Greenville, North Carolina, where she oversaw patient care, as well as administrative duties overseeing nursing staff. She also served as a preceptor to medical students during their family medicine rotations.

Murphy was in private practice from 1990 to 2011. She founded an independent, full-spectrum, family medicine practice in Gastonia, North Carolina, at a time when the town was struggling to attract family physicians and was facing an obstetrical care access problem. Murphy became a leading advocate for both patients and physicians at Gaston Memorial Hospital, where she established a family medicine department and delivered hundreds of babies.
Murphy’s success in Gastonia led her to the small mountain community of Sparta, North Carolina, where she pursued her dream of caring for the medically underserved. Outside of her clinical care, Murphy took an active role in educating the Sparta community, particularly in Alleghany County schools, where she introduced the national Tar Wars tobacco-free education program to fourth- and fifth-grade students.

In 2011, Murphy’s passion for teaching brought her to Cabarrus Family Medicine in Concord, North Carolina, where she continues mentoring the next generation of family physicians and providing care to patients of all ages. She remains very involved as a preceptor for medical schools both in and outside of North Carolina.

Murphy earned her bachelor’s degree in English and journalism from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas, and her medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Kansas City, Kansas. She completed her residency at the Duke University Family Medicine Residency Program in Durham, North Carolina. Murphy is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and has the AAFP Degree of Fellow, an earned degree awarded to family physicians for distinguished service and continuing medical education.

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**Editor’s Note:** To arrange an interview with Dr. Murphy, please contact Janelle Davis at (800) 274-2237, ext. 5222, or (913) 912-0377. A downloadable photo is available online [here](#).

**About the American Academy of Family Physicians**

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 120,900 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care.

Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits -- that’s 214 million visits annually -- 48 percent more than to the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America’s underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine’s cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care.

To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP’s positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit [www.aafp.org/media](http://www.aafp.org/media). For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP’s award-winning consumer website, [www.FamilyDoctor.org](http://www.FamilyDoctor.org).