

2026 Michigan Family Physician of the Year — Dr. Diane Harper

The Michigan Family Physician of the Year Award honors a physician who exemplifies the highest ideals of family medicine through clinical excellence, leadership, service, and dedication to patients and communities. This year, we are proud to recognize **Diane Harper, MD, MPH, MS, FAAFP**.

Dr. Harper has built a remarkable career defined by compassionate, comprehensive care and an extraordinary commitment to improving women's health in Michigan and beyond. A family physician, women's health specialist, and internationally recognized leader in cervical cancer prevention, she is known well for the empathy, expertise, and dedication she brings to both her patients and the broader practice of family medicine.

In addition to her role as a professor at the University of Michigan Medical School, Dr. Harper has been seeing patients at the Dexter Family Health Center. Patients describe her as kind, attentive, and proactive—someone who listens closely, makes them feel safe, and remains present through difficult moments. One patient, who had been in her care for over a decade, described how Dr. Harper stayed closely in contact through a serious medical crisis—coordinating with specialists, ensuring nothing fell through the cracks, and making sure she never had to face it alone. Her collaborative, whole-person approach has made a lasting difference for many patients and families.

But her influence extends far beyond the clinic.

Dr. Harper is an internationally recognized researcher whose work has had a far-reaching impact on cervical cancer prevention and screening. Over the course of her career, she has made major contributions to the study of human papillomavirus, advances in screening practices, and efforts to improve access and equity in women's health. Her research and leadership have informed medical practice and policy at the highest levels, including service on the United States Preventive Services Task Force, consultation with the World Health Organization, and presentations on multiple continents. In 2026, she was inducted as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in recognition of a body of work in cervical cancer prevention that has shaped practice and policy around the world. In 2024, she received the Great Dome Award from MIT — the highest honor the institution gives to an alumnus for service.

What makes all of this especially remarkable is that, even with a career of this scope and distinction, Dr. Harper has remained deeply committed to the teaching and mentorship that are so essential to family medicine. Over more than three decades in academic medicine, she has guided medical students, residents, fellows, and early-career faculty across multiple institutions and disciplines. Her influence as an

educator has helped shape countless physicians and physician leaders, extending her impact across generations.