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News Release

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Philadelphia VA physician earns White House award

A Philadelphia physician is one of two people in the Department of Veterans Affairs slated to receive a prestigious White House honor. Rachel Werner, MD, PhD, has been selected for the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, or PECASE, the highest government honor for science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their research careers.

Dr. Werner works at the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center and is an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a physician and health economist who mixes her clinical and economic skills to promote health care quality.

She is being honored for conceiving and leading pioneering research programs used to evaluate how monitoring health care providers' performance improves the quality, and equity, of the medical care that patients receive. Her research has examined in detail the effects of quality improvement incentives at hospitals and nursing homes, and demonstrates that those incentives may often have unintended consequences. Dr. Werner's research also shows how quality improvement performance measurement can be improved.

Established in 1996, the PECASE honors are presented each year by the President in a White House ceremony. President Obama named 85 researchers nationwide for the award.

The other VA recipient is Pamela J. VandeVord, PhD, of the John Dingell VA Medical Center in Detroit, Mich.

The White House press release is available at

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/pressroom/11052010>.