

America's Best in Medicine Highlights Dana Thomas, MD: Retired Two-Star Admiral, Physician-Scientist and Leader in Occupational and Aerospace Medicine

Advancing Public Health Through Military Leadership, Medical Epidemiology and Evidence-Based Strategies to Protect Individuals, Communities and Workforces



Washington, D.C, District of Columbia Aug 13, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - Dana Thomas, MD, is a distinguished physician-scientist, retired two-star admiral, and nationally recognized leader in occupational and aerospace medicine. With 25 years of service across the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, U.S. Army, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Thomas has dedicated her career to protecting the health of individuals, strengthening healthcare systems, and advancing evidence-based public health initiatives on both national and global scales.

Dr. Thomas concluded her distinguished federal career in 2024 as an Assistant Surgeon General for the U.S. Public Health Service and as the Assistant Commandant for Health, Safety, and Work-Life for the U.S. Coast Guard. In these leadership roles, she directed a healthcare network comprising 43 clinics and 126 afloat and ashore infirmaries, managed an annual healthcare budget of approximately \$1 billion, and innovated healthcare delivery systems to ensure care for Coast Guard personnel and their families around the world.

One of her most notable accomplishments came during the COVID-19 pandemic, when her strategic leadership and proactive public health measures resulted in zero active-duty COVID-19 deaths among U.S. Coast Guard personnel. By emphasizing prevention, workforce resilience, operational readiness, and a culture of safety and accountability, she demonstrated how data-driven leadership can protect both individuals and mission-critical organizations during unprecedented public health crises.

Dr. Thomas' academic background reflects the breadth of her expertise. She earned both her Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health degrees from George Washington University in 1998 before completing a Residency in Aerospace Medicine at the Naval Operational Medical Institute in Pensacola, Florida. She later completed the prestigious Epidemic Intelligence Service Fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and most recently earned a Master of Healthcare Delivery Science from Dartmouth College in 2024.

Throughout her career, Dr. Thomas has successfully bridged clinical medicine, scientific research and public health policy. During the 2016–2017 Zika epidemic, she served as Chief of Staff for the Puerto Rico Department of Health, coordinating the territory's public health response while contributing to landmark research that established the association between Zika virus infection and Guillain-Barré syndrome. Her work also focused on reducing unintended pregnancies and preventing congenital birth defects during one of the most complex infectious disease outbreaks in recent history.

She also played a leading role in evaluating acute and long-term health effects experienced by U.S. Coast Guard personnel who responded to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Her research examined environmental and occupational exposures affecting multiple body systems, contributing valuable knowledge that continues to inform workplace safety practices and occupational health policy.

An accomplished researcher, Dr. Thomas has authored or co-authored over 30 peer-reviewed publications covering infectious disease, occupational and environmental health, medical epidemiology, public health and policy. Her work reflects a consistent commitment to translating scientific evidence into practical solutions that improve health outcomes and strengthen preparedness. In addition to healthcare and public health services leadership at the federal, state, territorial and local levels, Dr. Thomas has shared her expertise as an educator at George Washington University and the Uniformed Services University, mentoring future physicians and public health professionals.

Dr. Thomas had the privilege of caring for her mother from 2024 to 2026, ensuring that her wish to remain at home with family present through the end of her life was honored. By the end of 2026, she will

launch a consultative service and private medicine practice in Great Falls, Virginia, utilizing decades of experience to enhance prevention, promote health and well-being, and assist families with end-of-life care decisions.

Ensuring that members of our community have the personalized care, support, and medical advocacy they need to navigate their health journey at every stage of their lives is her driving passion.

Dr. Thomas will continue to provide occupational and aerospace medicine consultation for legal professionals, employers and individuals. These evaluations identify risks, prevent occupational illness and injury, and support fair, evidence-based medical decision-making.

"What I enjoy most about practicing medicine is the ability to create meaningful change for the greater good," says Dr. Thomas. "I'm passionate about working upstream to prevent illness and injury. Whether these efforts allow us and our loved ones to improve our healthspan and continue living independently, protect our communities from infectious or environmental disease threats, create safer workplaces and ensure accountability for work-related disability, or demystify the current chaos of the existing healthcare infrastructure for any end user. My greatest contribution is using well-honed skills to build bridges for an individual, family, or enterprise that provide high-quality healthcare solutions."

Dr. Thomas is recognized as a Distinguished Fellow of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and maintains active membership in both the American Medical Association and the Aerospace Medical Association. Her career exemplifies the powerful intersection of scientific inquiry, strategic leadership, and public service.

Whether leading national health initiatives, advancing medical research, or helping individuals and organizations create healthier domains, Dr. Dana Thomas continues to demonstrate that effective healthcare leadership extends beyond treating illness—it requires preventing disease, protecting populations, and building systems that improve lives for generations to come.

Learn more about Dr. Dana Thomas:

Through her America's Best in Medicine profile: <https://americasbestinmedicine.com/connect/Dana-Thomas>

America's Best in Medicine

America's Best in Medicine is a specialist online platform dedicated to amplifying the voices of leading healthcare professionals across the United States. They bring together top healthcare providers from all specialties and cities to share expert-driven articles, research, commentary, and clinical insight. Their core purposes are to showcase excellence in healthcare, build trust between providers and the public, and ensure that expert voices are elevated and heard in shaping medicine. Through their platform, users can access a community of leaders, opportunities for providers to share expertise, and trusted guidance for patients and peers alike.

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Source : Dana Thomas

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