

# THE NEW JERSEY ITALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



## Catherine DeAngelis, M.D., M.P.H.

Doctor of Pediatrics, Editor-in-Chief, Journal of American Medical Association  
Born 1940

**Grade Level:** K-5

**Subject:** Science

**Categories:** Arts and Sciences / Italian and Italian American Women

### **Standards:**

Please see page 5 of the lesson plan for complete New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

### **Objectives:**

The students will be able to:

1. identify Catherine DeAngelis as a famous Italian/American female influence in medicine.
2. discuss, sequence, and summarize the accomplishments of Catherine DeAngelis.
3. research and identify various types of doctors and their course of study.

### **Abstract:**

Young students will discover the impact that Catherine DeAngelis had upon the field of medicine. They will explore the important role a doctor plays in society and the challenges one must overcome in order to attain the credentials and experience to fulfill this role.

Catherine DeAngelis, a woman of Italian American descent, paved the way for not only Italian Americans but for women of all backgrounds in a heavily male-dominated career. She pursued her dream of becoming a doctor with conviction despite her brief time of wondering if she should join the religious order of the Maryknoll Sisters.. Her compassion for others inspired her to develop many programs that would aid in bettering the lives of those who were in desperate need of health care.

### **Materials:**

- Background information
- Internet access
- Writing paper

- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Pencils

**Background:**

Catherine DeAngelis was born in a northeast Pennsylvania coal mining town in 1940. Her father worked in a silk mill. Catherine was always interested in science and dreamed of becoming a doctor. Unable to afford medical school, she enrolled in a three-year nursing program and became a registered nurse. She graduated in 1960 and decided to interview with the Maryknoll Sisters, a Catholic missionary order. She was told she would need to enroll in Catholic religion classes in order to be considered for acceptance to the order. This made her think twice about joining the Maryknoll Sisters. She wanted to be a nurse with the Maryknolls and decided she decided she could accomplish that outside a religious order. After careful consideration, and discussing her decision with people she respected, she decided to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor instead.

DeAngelis enrolled at Wilkes University Medical School on a recommendation from her high school chemistry teacher. While at Wilkes University, she worked in the infirmary and the laboratory on immunology research. She later continued her medical education at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. In order to afford the cost of attending school, she worked in the VA Hospital Library, taught student nurses, and worked on research in laboratories. Upon graduation, she took a residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. While at Johns Hopkins, Catherine worked in a free clinic and realized that there were many problems with health care for under-privileged people. She wanted to find a way to address these problems. To do so, she took another turn in her life. She decided to work on her master's degree, focusing on Public Health Fellowship at Harvard's National Institute of Health in Massachusetts. Upon earning her degree, she began working at the Roxbury Community Clinic in Boston where she once again witnessed patients not receiving quality care due to their financial status. She believed that better-trained nurses in handling basic pediatric care would help the situation. As a result she wrote a textbook on *Basic Pediatrics for Primary Care Providers* in 1973.

From 1973–1975, DeAngelis was a faculty member at the Columbia Physician College in New York City. Here she focused on improving pediatric health care in Harlem and Upper Manhattan utilizing nurse–physician teams. She spent 1975–1978 at the University of Wisconsin, where she organized children's health care systems making as many improvements as possible. In 1978, she returned to Johns Hopkins University as Chief of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. In 1984, DeAngelis was named the twelfth female full professor in the 96-year history of Johns Hopkins. In 1994, she became Deputy Chair of the Department and Vice Dean of Academic Affairs. During this time, DeAngelis worked to encourage and promote other female professors to higher positions.

Aside from her positions within the hospital, DeAngelis achieved many other accomplishments. From 1994–2000, she was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. In 1999, she was the first woman appointed to the prestigious position of Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Currently, DeAngelis resigned her position as the Editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2011. She has authored 11 books and has published 200 articles, editorials, etc. She is a council member at the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine. She has been appointed officer on several National Academic Societies and Chair of the American Board of Pediatrics. Currently, DeAngelis has returned to Johns Hopkins University, she serves as special advisor to the Dean and as president of the Alpha of Maryland chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. In addition, she serves on the advisory board of the U.S. Government Accountability Office, is a member of the board of Physicians for Human Rights, and serves on the board of trustees of the University of Pittsburgh.

**Procedures:**

- I. Ask the students to answer the following questions:
  - a. Why are doctors' and nurses' jobs important?
  - b. Do you think becoming a doctor or nurse is an easy thing to accomplish?
  - c. What different roles do doctors and nurses fill?
  - d. What are the major differences between doctors and nurses?
- II. The teacher should explain to the students that the focus of the day's lesson will be about one doctor who is a famous Italian/American woman.
- III. Discuss with the students the background information on Catherine DeAngelis. The teacher will need to give an explanation of who missionary sisters are and what they set out to accomplish.
- IV. Discuss with the students what they think or feel about their own pediatrician.
- V. Ask the students if they think there are other kinds of doctors, and if so, can they name different types of doctors.
- VI. Have upper-grade level students research different titles and studies of doctors, for example, a heart doctor is a cardiologist, a bone doctor is an orthopedist, a brain doctor is neurologist, etc. Encourage the students to think about different body parts as a point of reference to start their research. You may also want to have the students think about doctors for different age groups, for example, pediatricians, family physicians, and geriatricians.
  - a. Have the students list each doctor's title and one or two sentences describing their course of study.
- VII. The older students should also research and discuss the following question:
  - a. Why is research important in the job of a doctor or nurse?
- VIII. For the younger grade levels, the teacher should discuss with the students different types of doctors for different body parts or age levels of people.
- IX. Also for the younger students, have them draw a picture of themselves as a doctor. The students can easily show what type of doctor they would choose to be by including in their drawing what body part or age group they would work with.

Have the students work independently to write a brief summary of Catherine DeAngelis' professional career provided that this is developmentally appropriate.

- a. For the younger students, the teacher may want to practice comprehension by developing a class summary including a beginning, middle, and end sequencing Catherine's accomplishments.
  - b. What do you feel was Catherine's greatest accomplishment?
- X. Have the students discuss as a class the following:
- a. Do you feel that the career of a doctor is an easy job?
  - b. How many hours a day do you think a doctor works?
  - c. What type of problems do you think that doctors encounter in their jobs?
  - d. Do you feel the job of a doctor or nurse is a rewarding one?
  - e. Do you think they ever experience disappointments?
- XI. Ask the students to respond to the following:
- a. How do you think Catherine DeAngelis' professional career influenced or will influence other women to pursue professional careers?

**Assessment:**

- Evaluate the students' research on the various types of doctors and their course of study.
- Evaluate their summaries checking for content and sequence of DeAngelis' professional accomplishment.
- Discuss and evaluate the younger students' drawings.

**Extensions:**

- Have the students write an essay explaining the following:
  - If they had to choose the career of a doctor, what type of doctor would they choose and why?
- Have the older students read about DeAngelis becoming *The Journal of American Medical Association's* first female Editor-in-Chief.  
[https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography\\_77.html](https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_77.html)

**Background Resources:**

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/about/leadership/biography/catherine-deangelis>

## New Jersey Student Learning Standards Science

- 5.1.4.D.1 Actively participate in discussions about student data, questions, and understandings.
- 5.1.4.D.2 Work collaboratively to pose, refine and evaluate questions investigations, models, and theories.

### English Language Arts

#### SL.K.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

#### SL.K.2

Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

#### SL.1.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

#### SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

#### SL.2.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 2 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

#### SL.2.2

Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

#### SL.3.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### SL.3.2

Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### SL.4.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### SL.4.2

Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).

#### SL.5.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and

teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.5.2

Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats. (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).

W.K.2

Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

W.K.8

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

W.1.2

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.

W.1.8

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

W.2.2

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use evidence-based facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a conclusion.

W.2.8

Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

W.3.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.3.8

Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

W.4.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.4.8

Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

W.5.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.5.8

Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and

provide a list of sources.