

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 10, 2008

CONTACT: Beth Phillips, beth.phillips@ttuhsc.edu
(806) 743-2143

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing honored with Endowed Chair in Simulation and Nursing Education

Covenant Health System today announced a \$1 million gift to the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing to establish the Covenant Health System Endowed Chair in Simulation and Nursing Education.

Sharon Decker, R.N., Ph.D., was chosen to serve as the endowed chair. Decker is a professor and director of Clinical Simulations at TTUHSC School of Nursing.

The Endowed Chair in Simulation and Nursing Education is a partnership between TTUHSC and Covenant Health System that will provide innovative educational experiences in order to prepare students and nurses to provide safe, quality patient care.

Alexia Green, R.N., Ph.D., dean of the TTUHSC School of Nursing, said she is honored that Covenant chose TTUHSC for this endowment.

“We are proud of the work Dr. Decker has done for the simulation program at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing,” Green said. “Her commitment to the School of Nursing and to simulation makes her the perfect candidate for this endowed chair. With her qualifications and this endowment, Sharon will take our simulation program to a new level.”

“As the need to increase the nursing work force becomes more critical across the country, we all must work together to use innovative strategies in teaching our nurses and nursing students,” said Covenant Health System President and CEO Melinda Clark, R.N. “Together, Covenant and TTUHSC have created an innovative new partnership that will change the course of traditional nursing instruction.”

The use of simulation to facilitate learning to evaluate clinical competencies has grown rapidly throughout the world during the past decade, Decker said. This endowed chair will provide TTUHSC, Covenant Health System and Covenant School of Nursing a unique partnership for integrating simulation throughout the nursing curriculum and conducting research related to the use of simulation focused on improving patient outcomes.

Decker is a nationally-recognized expert in the use of simulation in nursing education. She has shared this expertise through multiple consultations, presentations and publications. She also has received numerous grants enabling TTUHSC to advance the integration of simulation throughout its curricula.

Her research program focuses on simulation as an innovative teaching modality to promote and evaluate critical and reflective thinking, clinical competence and patient safety initiatives. Her studies have provided an evidence-based framework for creating and using simulation in nursing education.

TTUHSC President John C. Baldwin, M.D., said the School of Nursing exemplifies this institution's commitment to providing the best education for students.

"Educating students and health care workers to put the patient's safety first at all times is of utmost importance. I commend Covenant Health System and the School of Nursing for their dedication not only to this issue, but also to providing the best care for patients," Baldwin said.

Decker received her Ph.D. with a concentration in philosophy in nursing from Texas Woman's University. She also holds a Master of Science degree in nursing from the University of Texas at Arlington.

She is an inaugural fellow in the National League for Nursing's Academy of Nursing Education. She holds an undergraduate degree in nursing from Baylor University. Her students have recognized her as TTUHSC Student Senate Teacher of the Year on numerous occasions. At state and national levels, Decker has been recognized by the National Student Nurses' Association for mentoring students.