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Texas Tech breaks ground on new nursing facility on Monday

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) will break ground on its new nursing facility at the TTUHSC campus in Abilene at 10 a.m. Monday (Nov. 7).

The university has secured enough funding to begin construction on the new School of Nursing building but continues to raise additional funding for the completion of the project. Hendrick Health System will help construct the facility, which will attach to the existing School of Pharmacy Building at 1718 Pine St., and then donate the nursing building to TTUHSC.

“Our community recognizes that quality health care is contingent upon quality education and training for our future nurses,” said Tim Lancaster, president and CEO of Hendrick Medical Center. “Our partnership with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center has been instrumental in attracting some of the best nursing candidates in the field, and hopefully keeping them in Abilene.”

As the state’s rapidly growing population ages and the need for care increases, there is a greater demand for nurses. The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies estimates that with strategies already in place, Texas will be short 71,000 nurses by 2020.

In March 2008, the TTUHSC School of Nursing partnered with Hendrick Health System to establish a Web-Based Second Degree Nursing Program in Abilene. Students gain clinical experience at Hendrick Medical Center and in local community-based agencies and clinics. The school expanded its traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program to Abilene in June 2009.

It is anticipated that the TTUHSC School of Nursing in Abilene will have an enrollment of an additional 160 to 200 students by 2015. Other programs available to Abilene and area residents are the online RN to BSN program and various graduate programs.

“We are fortunate to have visionary leaders with foresight to plan ahead for the community’s future,” said Pearl Merritt, Ph.D., R.N., regional dean of the TTUHSC School of Nursing in Abilene. “As regional dean, I am honored to be in the position to make a difference in our community.”