

News Release

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Larry Combest Community Health and Wellness Center Earns Community Health Quality Badges from Health Resources and Services Administration

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recently awarded four 2021 Community Health Quality Recognition badges to the Larry Combest Community Health and Wellness Center at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) School of Nursing.

HRSA requires Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to report standard core data every calendar year that includes patient characteristics, services provided and patients' use of those services, clinical processes and health outcomes, staffing, costs and revenues. The badges are awarded annually to FQHCs that achieve specific quality measures for that calendar year.

"We are very proud to be one of the very few nurse-managed FQHCs in the country and with primary patient care delivered by advance practice nurses," School of Nursing Dean Michael L. Evans, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, said. "This model has changed the lives and health of the over 10,000 patients for whom we care annually. The fact that our outcomes receive national recognition is extremely gratifying."

The 2021 badges earned by the Larry Combest Community Health and Wellness Center were in recognition of specific quality measures met during the 2020 reporting period, including access to care, quality, health equity and health information technology from all three center sites: the Larry Combest Community Health and Wellness Center and the Combest Central Community Health Center in Lubbock and Abilene Community Health Center. HRSA funds the centers for three-year periods.

Linda McMurry, DNP, R.N., executive director for the Larry Combest Community Health and Wellness Center, said the center received four badges:

- The Health Center Quality Leaders Badge, which recognizes the top 21-30% of FQHCs that achieve the best overall clinical quality measure performance.
- The Advancing Health Information Technology (HIT) for Quality Badge, which recognizes FQHCs that meet all criteria to optimize HIT services that advance telehealth, patient engagement, interoperability and the collection of social determinants of health to increase the access to care and advance the quality of care.
- The COVID-19 Reporter Badge, which recognizes FQHCs that supported data for public health emergencies with response rates to the weekly Health Center COVID-19 survey of 90% or more.
- The Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Badge, which recognizes all three locations as meeting standards to be designated a PCMH.

Despite the shut downs and restrictions that were in place during the early days of the pandemic, McMurry said the three clinics were able to remain fully operational and extended hours were offered at two locations, which allowed them to still serve 10,061 patients and meet the HRSA quality measures.

“We take care of a medically underserved population, so it was really important for us to be able to provide those extended hours of operations so our patients still had access to care,” McMurry said. “These awards are not location specific, but consist of the data for the three locations combined. We will continue to provide primary care and behavioral health care services, as well as COVID-19 testing and vaccines for our patients.”