

News Release

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TTUHSC to Expand Traditional BSN Program to Amarillo Campus

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) announced the expansion of the traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program to its Amarillo campus—an act that is expected to meaningfully contribute to the pool of qualified nurses for Amarillo and beyond. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the expansion yesterday (Oct. 19). Valerie Kiper, R.N., DNP, has been named regional dean of the School of Nursing in Amarillo. Kiper has more than four decades of nursing experience and currently serves as an associate professor of nursing at TTUHSC.

“Since its establishment in 1981, the TTUHSC School of Nursing has been committed to providing high-quality nurses to meet changing health care needs in the state of Texas,” TTUHSC President Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., said. “TTUHSC currently offers the traditional BSN program in Abilene, Lubbock, Mansfield and Odessa, where we have worked collaboratively as community partners to educate nurses and advance the knowledge and skills of experienced nurses; we are eager to build on our existing relationships in Amarillo to help meet the needs here as well.”

TTUHSC faculty members prepare students at the baccalaureate, master and doctoral levels using a variety of instructional methods and program options. More specifically, the traditional BSN program at TTUHSC offers state-of-the-art nursing education for students who are not yet registered nurses (RN). Upon completion of lower-division prerequisite coursework, students complete approximately 60-semester credit hours of upper-division coursework at TTUHSC across four semesters.

“We have grown the School of Nursing to educate thousands of students since I became dean in 2012, making our institution the largest school at TTUHSC and one of the largest in the state of Texas,” TTUHSC School of Nursing Dean Michael Evans, Ph.D., R.N., said. “This expansion, though, means the most to me because this is in my hometown, and we get to make an immediate impact on caring for our community at home and beyond.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the need for a more robust nursing workforce in the Panhandle and the state. According to a 2019 study from the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies, Texas is projected to face a shortage of nurses from 2015 through 2030. By 2030, the supply of RN full-time equivalents (FTE) is expected to grow by 35.4 percent, while demand will grow by 53.8 percent, leaving a deficit of 59,970 RN FTEs. Texas continues to have higher



vacancy and turnover rates than other states with comparable populations, and the RN vacancy rate was highest in West Texas at 13.1%.

The TTUHSC School of Nursing is nationally accredited and has a highly regarded reputation for nursing excellence. [Nursing Schools Almanac ranked the School of Nursing](#) among the best nursing schools in the state and nation, noting the school's NCLEX first-time pass rate of 97 percent.

Currently, TTUHSC in Amarillo offers accessibility to its distance learning curriculum for undergraduate degrees — RN to BSN, Accelerated BSN and Veteran to BSN — and graduate degrees and certificates — master's, post-master's and Doctor of Nursing Practice. The expansion of the School of Nursing program has been an endeavor of high importance for health care community leadership in the Amarillo area for many years. As such, TTUHSC faculty will work to build excellent relationships within the community with an intentional desire to collaborate with nursing faculty at other colleges and universities in the area.

Support from BSA Health System, Baptist Community Services and the Harrington Cancer and Health Foundation have made this expansion possible.

The program is set to start classes in January 2022. For more information on application information www.ttuhsc.edu/nursing.

Statements of Support

“Even before the pandemic, we struggled to meet the demands for nursing in our community,” Amarillo Mayor Ginger Nelson said. “Our nurses do important work, and I’m grateful this program will increase the number of nurses we have in Amarillo.”

“While there are many topics that may be tagged as contributors to the health care crisis, the shortage of nurses is the most pressing day-to-day crisis we face, and COVID has exacerbated the shortage,” Bob Williams, president and CEO of BSA Health System of Amarillo, said. “We are delighted to support the expansion program and the future expansion of the partnership between BSA and TTUHSC.”

“It is hard to compete with other markets across the state to recruit nurses who want to live and raise a family in our community,” Gainor Davis, executive director of Harrington Cancer and Health Foundation, said. “Students who are educated and gaining clinical experience in our hospitals have a higher probability of staying here; therefore, it is important to have more opportunities for nurses to receive their BSN in this area.”

“As a leading provider of health care services for the area, we see each and every day how critical it is to have a well-educated community of nurses to care for area patients,” Steve Dalrymple, president, CEO and chief legal officer of Baptist Community Services, said. “We are thrilled to support TTUHSC in bringing more highly-skilled health care professionals to our area.”