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Contacts: Laura Tolentino, 979.862.5805, lauratol@tamu.edu
Texas A&M Health, Marketing & Communications

Suzanna Cisneros, 806.773.4242, suzanna.cisneros@ttuhsc.edu
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Communications & Marketing

Historic collaboration brings shipping container-based health care clinic to Jeff Davis County

Texas A&M Health and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center unlock unprecedented health care access for underserved rural community

FORT DAVIS, Texas—[Texas A&M University Health Science Center \(Texas A&M Health\)](#) and [Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center \(TTUHSC\)](#) joined with the student-led organization, [Texas A&M BUILD](#)—along with local leadership and other collaborators—to unveil a new, innovative medical care facility for a Trans-Pecos region rural community: a 40-foot, retro-fitted shipping container. The research institutions came together today for a dedication ceremony featuring a ribbon cutting and keynote remarks from university and local leaders.

“Reaching out a hand to help fellow Texans is the veritable heartbeat of Texas A&M,” said Texas A&M University System Chancellor Glenn Hagar. “Getting to do that alongside a fellow leading research institute just distills and amplifies the reach, care and values Texas A&M supports across our great state. The innovation and collaboration Texas A&M experts and providers can bring to our rural communities mean better care, increased access and improved health outcomes for Texans. We’re proud to transform the far horizons of rural health into today’s realities.”

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Office of Marketing and Communications

8441 John Sharp Parkway, Clinical Building 1, Ste. 4130 | Bryan, TX 77807 | health.tamu.edu

This collaboration unlocks unprecedented health care access for [Jeff Davis County](#), which has a population of just under 2,000 residents. Before the new clinic's dedication, local access to care was limited to a small health care presence, often requiring residents to drive at least half an hour, or 22 miles, to [Alpine, Texas](#), for general medical care.

"The Texas Tech University System has a history of identifying critical needs in our state and creating solutions to address those challenges, particularly in rural areas," said Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, chancellor of the Texas Tech University System. "We did it in 1969 when we opened the School of Medicine to address a severe shortage of primary care physicians and the health disparities in West Texas. Now, we are proud to build upon our decades-long efforts in telehealth and provide a solution for the people of Jeff Davis County. Our team looks forward to working with our colleagues at the Texas A&M University System on this vital effort and the impact we will have on this region together."

The move addresses a crucial need for a critical population in the state of Texas, according to Indra K. Reddy, PhD, interim chief operating officer and vice president of Texas A&M Health.

"Rural communities are the backbone of Texas, and advancing their health and well-being requires meaningful collaboration," Reddy said. "Through this partnership between Texas A&M Health and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, we are combining strengths to deliver innovative, community-centered care and strengthen the rural health workforce—fulfilling our land-grant mission at Texas A&M and extending the reach of academic medicine where it's needed most."

TTUHSC President Lori Rice-Spearman, PhD, said the clinic compounds upon ongoing efforts by TTUHSC to meet Texans in their needs.

"Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center has been using telemedicine for decades to reach rural and underserved communities across Texas," Rice-Spearman said. "The new Davis Mountain Clinic builds on that legacy. It's about meeting people where they are and making it easier to get the care they need. We're proud to partner with Texas A&M University on this new and innovative way to support the Fort Davis community."

[Texas A&M Health](#) and [TTUHSC](#) spearheaded the effort to bring a BUILD facility to Jeff Davis County. Equipped with telehealth and tele-counseling capabilities, the facility offers convenient access to health care provided by both health science centers. Licensed professionals from the [Texas A&M Health Telehealth Institute](#) will provide tele-counseling services, while TTUHSC family medicine doctors and medical residents based at [Texas Tech Physicians](#) in Odessa will provide telemedicine services.

“The launch of the Jeff Davis BUILD medical container—the second of its kind in Texas—marks a step forward in our mission to bring essential health care directly to rural communities,” said Carly McCord, PhD, executive director of the [Texas A&M Health Telehealth Institute](#). “This collaboration effort with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center will provide vital primary care and telebehavioral health services, addressing immediate needs in Jeff Davis County. We aim to ensure a truly comprehensive approach to fostering a healthier, more resilient community.”

With both universities already working to forge new community relationships to address health care disparities, combining efforts offered avenues to maximize resources and potential. Adrian Billings, MD, PhD, associate academic dean of the [Rural and Community Engagement Division](#) in the School of Medicine at TTUHSC, emphasized the importance of collaboration over competition, not only to bring health care closer to home, but also to ensure that medical education is closely aligned with the real-world needs of rural communities.

“I think what Texas A&M and TTUHSC are accomplishing here is instead of competing, we are working together collaboratively to try and meet the needs of this [frontier health](#) area that has a professional shortage and very limited access to care,” Billings said. “And not only is it about meeting the needs of the community members that live there in the county, but it's also about trying to expose more of our trainees to frontier medicine or rural medicine. This is truly frontier medicine because of the low population density.”

In line with the [BUILD tradition](#) of naming clinics after fallen Aggies, the [Fort Davis](#) clinic is dedicated to Airman 1st Class [James "Adam" Lassiter '08](#), who died in 2012 while on active duty with the [U.S. Air Force](#). Once the clinic opens, the county plans to offer daily access to a nearby community center where residents can get help signing up for free or reduced-cost health insurance. Future plans may also include child care services to support families and help grow the county's shrinking population. For everyone involved, collaboration is not just a strategy—it's a means to ensure that the focus remains on what matters most: the well-being of rural communities and the people within them.

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ABOUT TEXAS A&M BUILD

BUILD is a student-led organization aimed at unifying Texas A&M's student body through a physically uniting effort, encouraging students to interact and work alongside each other throughout the processes of planning, organizing, and constructing the project. In an exemplification of Aggie Core Values, BUILD designs, constructs, and deploys Texas Aggie Medical Clinics worldwide as a tribute to the lives lost in the collapse of the Aggie Bonfire. Learn more at builddtamu.com, and follow [@builddtamu](https://www.instagram.com/builddtamu) on social media.

ABOUT TEXAS A&M HEALTH

Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health) comprises five colleges and schools (dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and public health), integrated University Health Services, several research centers and institutes, and numerous outpatient clinics with a shared mission of advancing health care for all. We serve the state and beyond with campuses and locations in Bryan-College Station, Dallas, Houston, Round Rock, Kingsville, Corpus Christi, McAllen and Navasota. Learn more at health.tamu.edu or follow [@TAMUHealth](https://twitter.com/TAMUHealth) on X (née Twitter).

ABOUT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to improving access to quality health care through education, research and patient care. TTUHSC is comprised of six schools: medicine, nursing, health professions, pharmacy, graduate school of biomedical sciences and population and public health. With campuses across Texas, TTUHSC graduates more health professionals than any other institution in the state.

Texas Tech Physicians, the clinical practice of the TTUHSC School of Medicine, delivers academic medicine, where expert care is guided by the latest research and shaped by the collaborative efforts of physicians, educators and learners.

TTUHSC is a member of the Texas Tech University System. Learn more at www.ttuhsc.edu or follow [@TTUHSC](https://twitter.com/TTUHSC) on social media.