



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 10, 2025

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Lubbock ISD Middle School Students Become Docs for a Day *TTUHSC SNMA Ignite Curiosity for Health Care Professions*

Lubbock Independent School District students from Atkins Middle School, McCool Academy and Evans Middle School became doctors for a day as the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Student National Medical Association (SNMA) hosted Docs for a Day today (Nov. 10).

Elena Holguin from the Commander Willie C. McCool Academy said the experience provided hands-on learning for middle school students.

“We are a project-based learning school,” Holguin said. “Docs for a Day is very much real-world application to what they're learning in class. They're able to apply everything that they're learning and see it actually in action, and get those firsthand accounts from medical students, which is really awesome.”

Taylyn Sytsma, a student at Evans Middle School, has thought of becoming a health care professional and said she learned to diagnose appendicitis on a mock patient by doing a physical exam.

“The most fun part about today was just getting to be the doctor in the situation, asking them about what started it, how they're feeling, and especially seeing different cases. Doing a physical exam, pressing on the patient’s stomach, seeing how it felt, asking her questions about fever, chills, pain levels, things like that. It's definitely very fun.”

Margo Haltom, an Evans Middle School science teacher, said she enjoyed watching Sytsma and the other students apply their science.

“You could just see her eyes light up,” Haltom said. “It was just great seeing the students explore what they want to do with their future.”

The purpose of Docs for a Day is to inspire and inform middle school students as they experience a day in the life of a medical student. Adeola Gbadebo, SNMA president and second-year medical student, said the organization wanted to create an interactive and fun way to expose students to the field of medicine.

“This initiative provides local middle school students the opportunity to spend an afternoon at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and walk in the shoes of TTUHSC medical students,” Gbadebo said. “We want to get students thinking about medicine as early as possible. The Docs for a Day event hopefully will spark an interest in becoming a physician, especially for students who may not have had opportunities to explore health care careers.”

Students took part in a hands-on learning experience at the TTUHSC F. Marie Hall SimLife Center, where they diagnosed simulated patients, explored how physicians use ultrasound technology, practiced with high-fidelity mannequins in the simulation lab and toured the TTUHSC campus.

“Docs for a Day was designed to ignite curiosity about careers in medicine,” Favor Louis, SNMA community outreach chair and second-year medical student, said. “Many students never may have imagined they too can go into this profession. Our hope is that the students will walk away learning more about the health care profession and knowing they too can become a doctor.”