

News Release

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Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Awarded \$24.5 Million Five-Year Grant from the National Institutes of Health

Moving healthcare from the laboratory bench to the community doorstep

[Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center](#) (TTUHSC), in collaboration with Texas Tech University, has received a \$24.5 million five-year grant, the largest National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant in the Texas Tech University System's history. The funding is provided through an NIH U54 cooperative agreement, a prestigious institutional center grant designed to support large-scale, multidisciplinary research programs.

TTUHSC will use the funding to build research capacity, mentorship and professional development while strengthening community engagement in its 121-county service area, with a focus on medically underserved populations.

Lance R. McMahon, Ph.D., TTUHSC executive vice president for research and innovation; Julie St. John, Ph.D., DrPH, professor in the TTUHSC School of Health Professions; and Naima Moustaid-Moussa, Ph.D., executive director of the Institute for One Health Innovation, are the principal investigators for the grant.

The grant will build on TTUHSC's foundation in basic and translational research while expanding clinical engagement and implementation science. A central component will be engaging communities from the outset to identify health priorities, develop solutions and put sustainable health improvements into practice.

McMahon said this NIH award represents a significant milestone for TTUHSC, after decades of building its research, education and clinical capabilities.

"TTUHSC has a long and successful track record of applying cutting-edge laboratory inquiry to identify basic mechanisms of disease and new treatments," McMahon said. "While this U54 grant continues to strengthen fundamental discovery at TTUHSC, there is an equally strong focus on promoting the translation of laboratory findings into real-world settings. This approach will combine population health data analyses, implementation science, health services research and community-based participatory research to directly address local needs. It is one thing to create a new treatment in a

research lab. It's an entirely different matter to effectively deliver that treatment into a community, especially rural communities."

Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., TTUHSC president, said the award will strengthen the university's ability to address health challenges across its vast service area.

"This significant NIH award reflects the enduring commitment of our investigators and community partners to improving health across the rural communities we serve," Rice-Spearman said. "As the largest NIH grant in TTU System history, this award will significantly strengthen our capacity to conduct innovative research focused on the pressing health needs of medically underserved populations."

Brandon Creighton, J.D., Texas Tech University System chancellor, said the award demonstrates the importance of translating research discoveries into meaningful improvements for the communities the System serves.

"For West Texas, great research is judged by the difference it makes in the lives of the people and communities we serve," Creighton said. "This NIH investment will help TTUHSC move discoveries from the laboratory into communities across our region, turning breakthrough research into new treatments and better care. TTUHSC has the talent, the reach and the responsibility to lead that work."

Unlike independent research grants, U54 centers operate through cooperative agreements that include direct collaboration with NIH program staff. The NIH and TTUHSC will work together on areas including milestones, strategic refinements, protocol modifications, data sharing and network coordination. The structure is designed to support large-scale efforts spanning areas such as translational research, population health, data integration and clinical research infrastructure.

"This major investment in TTUHSC will help in our shared mission to continue strengthening healthcare education programs and rural health systems in Texas," Texas House Speaker Dustin Burrows said. "Last session, the Texas Legislature secured a historic \$25 million investment for TTUHSC's Rural Cancer Collaborative, and this grant will further efforts to improve rural healthcare access and advance medical research. I look forward to continuing our state work with federal and local partners to build on TTUHSC's mission and address rural healthcare needs across Texas."