



# News Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **TTUHSC Announces the Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health**

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) today (May 24) officially launched the Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health. The school, which is the sixth at the university, aims to train future health care leaders in population and public health – a sector of health care that has been elevated in public awareness and prominence by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health officially will reside on the TTUHSC Abilene, Texas, campus, offer students and researchers a collaborative educational experience, emphasizing research and use of large data sets to understand needs in health care delivery.

“The pandemic has created more public awareness of the need to improve the delivery of health care, remove barriers for marginalized populations and develop health policy that will transform the health care system in the United States,” said Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center president. “In addition, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of international collaboration in population health policies and practices. The new Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health will address these needs, especially in the rural and underserved areas of Texas where the disparity is greatest.”

The nationally-recognized TTUHSC Master of Public Health (MPH) program, which recently was ranked among the [nation’s top-100 by the U.S. News & World Report’s 2023 Best Graduate School Rankings](#), will offer related dual-and joint-degree programs and a graduate certificate in public health. The current joint-degree offerings include M.D./MPH, MPA/MPH and a Pharm.D./MPH.

“We want everyone who leaves the doors of the Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health to remember the communities they serve,” said Billy Philips, Ph.D., acting dean of the Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health. “When the next threat to our health comes around, and it will, we will be there ready to serve and our graduates will lead those efforts.”

TTUHSC Provost and Chief Academic Officer Darrin D'Agostino, D.O., said developing a school of population and public health creates opportunity for TTUHSC to enhance the health care in the communities it serves.

“With Abilene as the epicenter of our population and public health efforts, we envision making it possible for every patient-facing student that graduates from TTUHSC to have an opportunity to earn a degree in the Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health,” D'Agostino said. “This new school will help drive the efforts of all of the TTUHSC schools to prevent disease, enhance health and promote wellness. Through shared goals and collaboration, TTUHSC and Texas Tech University will create joint and dual degree offerings for our students which we believe will advance our mission to transform health care through innovation and collaboration.”

The TTUHSC public health program has been accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health since 2018. In addition to the traditional program, a 15-month accelerated program also is available. Today, the school enrolls nearly 120 students in Lubbock, Abilene and online.

The school is named in honor of Julia Jones Matthews, a longtime supporter of the Abilene community and the university. In 2017, TTUHSC officially named the Department of Public Health in honor of Matthews and carried that namesake to the school.

The university will host a special ceremony celebrating the launch of the school on the Abilene campus in June.