GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Texas A&M University Naresh K. Vashisht College of Medicine: Building the Hill Country's Rural Healthcare Workforce

Investing in the Next Generation of Healthcare Professionals for Llano, Mason, and Gillespie Counties

CreateHealthy

Create Healthy Funding Priority: Health Education

Identifying Opportunities

The philosophy behind the Create Healthy – Texas A&M Vashisht College of Medicine partnership is that increasing the number of healthcare providers choosing to practice in rural Hill Country communities starts early and starts close to home.

By investing in Hill Country students early in their education and introducing them to a wide range of healthcare careers, the program increases the likelihood they'll pursue health-related degrees and eventually return home to serve their communities. This local pipeline approach strengthens access to timely, high-quality care for Hill Country residents.

Early, hands-on healthcare learning opportunities, mentorship from current and other healthcare profession students, and seeing first-hand what is possible with a career in healthcare inspires young learners and provides real-world, actionable information and tactics that turn a dream into reality.

At the same time, providing medical students with rural rotations early in their medical education increases the likelihood they'll choose to practice in a rural community after residency, helping sustain the region's healthcare workforce for years to come.

Create Healthy's Investment

With support from Create Healthy and other regional partners, the college takes a multi-pronged approach to strengthening the Hill Country's healthcare workforce — by inspiring students, supporting educators, and connecting medical trainees to real-world rural experience.

Hill Country Impact



By investing in every stage of education, the Texas A&M Vashisht College of Medicine is building a sustainable healthcare workforce for the Hill Country. These initiatives are cultivating a stronger, more resilient healthcare system for the Hill Country — one inspired student, one classroom, and one community at a time.

By pairing real-world rural clinical experiences with classroom mentorship and community engagement, the Texas A&M Vashisht College of Medicine is planting deep roots for the Hill Country's healthcare future by inspiring students, strengthening the workforce, and making timely care accessible close to home.

"Regional partners like Create Healthy are an important lifeline for our program. Create Healthy's support puts medical students in Llano, Mason, and Fredericksburg clinics and practices and brings healthcare fairs to life for young people. The impact happens in the Hill Country. The funds stay local and help build pathways for tomorrow's healthcare providers."



Curtis J. Donaldson
Executive Director
Texas A&M Rural Medicine

CreateHealthy.org

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Medical Student Rotations

Current Texas A&M medical school students are placed in Hill Country clinics and practices for two-week rotations so they can see firsthand the role and value of rural healthcare and forge the relationships they can draw on after their residencies to begin a rural healthcare career. During these rotations, medical students live and work in our communities and gain valuable experience under the guidance of rural healthcare providers to deepen their understanding of the benefits and challenges of practicing medicine in rural communities.

"We know it is a long journey to become a healthcare professional. Our partnership with the Texas A&M Vashisht College of Medicine helps ensure that students in our communities have the encouragement, exposure, and support they need to stay on that path. Together, we are building a stronger healthcare workforce for the Hill Country and investing in our younger students at the same time."



Jayne Pope
President & CEO
Create Healthy

Community Healthcare Fairs

Coordinated with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Family and Community Health Agents, these healthcare fairs offer health education and direct services, such as free screenings and mobile mammography, in our communities.

ISD Champions Program

Local educators within independent school districts in Gillespie, Llano, and Mason Counties serve as program champions for K-12 outreach and engagement. These champions bring healthcare to life through classroom demonstrations, discussions, and mentorship — whether it's a CPR lesson, suturing exercise, or conversation with visiting Texas A&M medical students about what it takes to pursue a healthcare career.

These champions facilitate student participation in Texas A&M's free enrichment activities, including School to Scrubs Clubs and Mini Med Camp, the goals of which are to provide immersive experiences for students to grow their knowledge of healthcare careers.

They also build long-term relationships with healthcare-career focused students from middle school to college and through higher education. ISD Champions ensure young people have a local advocate to help them navigate their educational and professional journeys.

"Create Healthy's support lets us truly be present in schools and show rural students that their communities believe in them. These are local dollars creating local opportunities, whether it is a medical student visiting a classroom in Mason or a hands-on enrichment in Harper. That connection tells kids their hometown is investing in their future, and their dreams matter."



Carol Brewer, M.Ed.
Director
Texas A&M K-12 Rural Medicine Outreach

About Create Healthy

Create Healthy is on a mission to invest in the health and wellness of the Hill Country and empower its communities to build a healthy future. Create Healthy's vision is a Hill Country where all can contribute and thrive. Led by Jayne Pope, the foundation is overseen by a volunteer board of directors.

Learn more about our community investments at Create Healthy.org