

## Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D.

### What are you announcing today?

0:06

So today's ribbon cutting is about introducing the Institute for Telehealth and Digital Innovation across our university and across our campuses in the regions we share out here in North and West Texas.

### What do you think the impact of this institute will be?

0:23

This institute will be the bed of academic preparation and research on the efficacy of telehealth and digital innovation. But it's also going to be a place from where we provide particularly specialty care and caring communities that still struggled to get access to good health care.

### What is telehealth and digital health?

0:48

So telehealth and digital health are tools that healthcare providers can use to help individuals continue to gain access to health care. We're moving towards a technology enhanced ecosystem in health care. And so it's important that we understand how we can use these tools to help individuals be advocates for their own care.

### What is an example of digital care?

1:19

So one of the best examples that is now on the market is management of chronic health and heart conditions, were able to send a scale home with heart patients, they can weigh themselves daily, that reading from that scale goes back to the health care provider who is monitoring their progress and how they're monitoring their disease. And we can provide early intervention that may prevent them from having to come to an emergency room or an urgent care clinic and let them stay home and get intervention there.

### How did TTUHSC begin using telemedicine?

1:56

So over three decades ago, the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center had what we refer to as our first telehealth visit. And that's where a physician who needed additional information and access reached out to one of our physicians here at the Health Sciences Center and requested can you walk me through one of these procedures so that we can care for our patient here in this community. And that's exactly what we did. And it kicked off really the idea over 30 years ago that we could do this for all of our rural communities. And so that's exactly what we began engaging in. We've done it for decades with challenging reimbursement models, but did it because it was the right thing to do to take care of our rural communities and support them, particularly when it comes to specialty care in some of those more challenging diseases. With COVID, it exploded, and we show that we were able to truly support these communities and those individuals, and we decided that we were going to leverage that technology and blow this

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thing up and really use it as a tool to push healthcare into those communities for some of these more challenging chronic diseases.

### Anything else to add?

3:08

So this institute would not be possible without the many partners we have across all of North and West Texas, in the 88th legislative session. Many of our legislators, our representatives and our state senator, worked with us to make sure that we were able to execute this vision of this Telehealth and Digital Innovation Institute. And so we just want to thank them for their support. They are excited to see the impact of this institute, and we look forward to the next legislative session and continued support.