



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2022

CONTACT: Suzanna Cisneros, Suzanna.cisneros@ttuhsc.edu
(806) 773-4242

Fifth Graders Become Doctors for a Day *TTUHSC School of Medicine Students Host Minicamp*

Fifth graders from Bean Elementary School become doctors for a day. The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Student National Medical Association (SNMA) hosted the Doctors for a Day Minicamp today (Sept. 23).

The mission of the camp was to inspire and inform the elementary students to experience a day in the life of a medical student. Elwin Rutayomba and Yaw Adu, TTUHSC SNMA co-presidents and second-year TTUHSC medical students, said the organization created the event as an interactive and fun way to expose students to the field of medicine.

“Doctors for a Day gives the students opportunities to discover medicine in an engaging environment, but most importantly, our hope is the experience cultivated a student’s interest in medicine as a potential career path,” Adu said.

Students received hands-on experience at the TTUHSC F. Marie Hall SimLife Center diagnosing patients with different medical scenarios, working with ultrasound equipment to learn how they are used by physicians, working with simulation mannequins in the simulation lab and seeing an emergency simulation act. Sklyler Thipaphay, TTUHSC SNMA member and second-year medical student, said it is important to start sowing the seeds of higher education at these early and pivotal stages.

“We want to get students thinking about medicine as early as elementary school, especially underserved and underrepresented minorities,” Thipaphay said. “Many students never may have imagined they too can go into this profession. When minority students see medical students, who look like them in white coats, our hope is that the students will walk away knowing they too can become a doctor. This experience is invaluable and immeasurable.”

Steven L. Berk, M.D., TTUHSC executive vice president and dean of the School of Medicine, said the TTUHSC SNMA chapter has inspired students at all levels.

“For more than a decade, our SNMA chapter has taken a lead in inspiring students from all backgrounds to consider health care fields,” Berk said. “SNMA has raised hundreds

of thousands of dollars for scholarships and has helped to guarantee Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center creates a superior learning environment for all students.”

Rutayomba said SNMA is dedicated to ensuring medical education and health care are culturally sensitive to the needs of diverse populations, and to increasing the number of students of color entering and completing medical school.

“SNMA programs are designed to serve the health needs of underserved communities and communities of color,” Rutayomba said. “What a better way to stress education by taking fifth graders and giving them the experience of becoming a doctor for a day. They will get an opportunity to see first-hand how physicians and students use the knowledge they learned and most importantly we will remind the fifth-grade students, they too can be here one day.”