



TBeat

A newsletter produced by the Heartland National TB Center

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Heartland 20th Anniversary

For more than two decades, Heartland had the privilege of working with dedicated TB professionals across the United States. We look forward to continuing this work together in the years ahead. Our fight against TB would not be possible without the steadfast support of our community. We invite you to visit our webpage to explore photos from over the years and see our story unfold.

Training Results

In 2025, Heartland National TB Center hosted 131.75 hours of training, reaching 7,469 distance learners and 517 onsite participants. A standout event was our Nurse Expert Meeting, which brought together nurses from across Texas, representing multiple jurisdictions and regional offices for collaborative learning and expert dialogue.

Following the Nurse Expert Meeting, Lieutenant Commander Steven Treviño authored a feature highlighting the event, published in the United States Public Health Service newsletter. For more details, we invite you to read the full feature [here](#).

Below are selected comments from participant evaluations following the meeting:

“Great presentation and introduction to binational programs! Love it and love the work they do!”

“Loved hearing from the patient perspective, how they feel, what they are going through. Reinforced that words matter. Loved this!”





TB Binational Programs

We were honored to connect with TB nurse experts from Texas/Mexico binational programs during our recent Nurse Expert Meeting and training session. The nurses pictured represent three of the four border binational initiatives, Grupo Sin Fronteras, Esperanza y Amistad, and the Juntos Project, which brought extensive experience managing some of the most complex forms of TB, including drug-resistant TB.



Their clinical expertise, leadership, and dedication to cross-border collaboration are vital to ensuring continuity of care and positive outcomes for patients along the border. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with these exceptional nursing professionals and to support their essential work in safeguarding public health on both sides of the border.

Heartland Highlights Dr. Jeffrey Starke

Dr. Starke is an internationally recognized authority in the management of childhood TB and other mycobacterial infections. He has contributed to the development of numerous clinical guidelines for the City of Houston, the State of Texas, the CDC, the American Thoracic Society, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, and the World Health Organization.



The award inscription reads:

“With deep appreciation for your dedicated years of compassionate care, unwavering commitment, and tireless advocacy for the health and well-being of countless children. Your impact will be felt for generations to come.”

Honoring Our Rising Star Award Recipients

During the TB Nurse Expert Meeting held November 6–7, 2025, Heartland National TB Center proudly presented the Rising Star Award to Matthew Whitson (30 presentations and 11 years), Barbara J. Martinez (23 presentations and 16 years), Jacqueline Maldonado (18 presentations and 10 years), Melissa Davis (12 presentations and 8 years), and Lori Eitelbach (37 presentations and 8 years) in recognition of their exceptional dedication to TB education and patient care. For more than a decade, these outstanding TB nurse experts have partnered with HNTC as speakers and subject matter experts, generously sharing their knowledge and experience with audiences across Texas and beyond.

Their leadership, compassion, and longstanding collaboration have strengthened our training initiatives and advanced TB prevention and treatment efforts. We are deeply grateful for their lasting impact on HNTC’s mission to eliminate tuberculosis. Their continued commitment inspires our collective pursuit of a TB-free future, and we hope their example encourages other nurses to become the next generation of Rising Stars in TB care and education.



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Spotlight: Heartland's Extended Family Featuring Lori Eitelbach, BSN, RN

Lori has worked with Heartland for the past 9 years, sharing her time and expertise with TB nurses. She has delivered over 37 presentations and provided her knowledge and expertise to over 23 trainings. We thank Lori for all of the patients she has helped and her lasting impact. The following are her responses to questions related to her career throughout TB.

What drew you to working with patients affected by tuberculosis and what made you shift your career to TB?

"I didn't enter nursing until my early 40s. Before that, I spent 20 years working in Human Resources. Over time, soul-searching led me to nursing, and after working in a variety of nursing roles, I eventually found my way to public health. Knowing that my work makes a difference not only in an individual patient's life but also in the health of the broader community is extremely satisfying to me."

How has your role evolved since you first began working in TB care?

"I started as a part-time TB Nurse Case Manager but was quickly hired full-time. Then, our Medical Director who was acting as the TB Program Manager resigned, and she trained me to take on the Program Manager role. Since then, I've worked in a dual role as Program Manager and TB Nurse Case Manager."

What do you find most rewarding about working with TB patients?

"That's easy - it's helping our TB patients through treatment so they can be cured, feel better, and get back to their normal lives. Often, when they first come to us, they're not feeling well and have a lot of anxiety surrounding their TB diagnosis – whether from stigma, isolation, or just simply the unknown. I love being given the opportunity to educate patients and their families about TB and to support them as they become more comfortable with their diagnosis and begin to see the benefits and progress of this long but rewarding journey that we walk together."

If readers take away one message about TB work, what would you want it to be?

"When I tell people I work in TB, I often hear things like, 'I thought TB was eradicated,' or 'Do we still have TB in the U.S.?' or even, 'That must be really hard to work with TB patients.' Those reactions give me the opportunity to talk about what TB care really looks like and why it's so important. While TB is preventable and curable, it's still the leading infectious disease killer worldwide, affecting more than 10 million people each year, including over 8,000 people in the U.S. Caring for people with TB and supporting their families is rewarding in so many ways. Because treatment usually lasts 6 - 9 months, I really get to know my patients and their families, and I value those relationships. I get to watch patients go from feeling sick to feeling well again and getting back to their normal lives. Being able to educate the community and help reduce the impact of TB right here in our county makes the work even more meaningful to me. Every successfully treated patient helps protect others in the community, so it carries a dual impact - improving individual lives while contributing to broader public health outcomes. TB work matters - every patient we help brings us closer to healthier communities and a world where TB is no longer a threat. The world of TB care is a small but mighty community of dedicated healthcare professionals, united by a shared passion for supporting patients and advancing TB elimination. I'm proud to stand alongside them!"



World Tuberculosis Day: The Dawning of a New Age



Tuesday, March 24, 2026

9:00 am - 12:30 pm CST

On campus tour to follow at Texas Center of Infectious Disease campus

Join TB experts from Heartland National TB Center, Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Center for Infectious Disease, and the Interdisciplinary NexGen TB Research Advancement Center at Texas Biomedical Research Institute as they discuss the future of TB and other cutting edge topics in the field of TB!

Register Here!





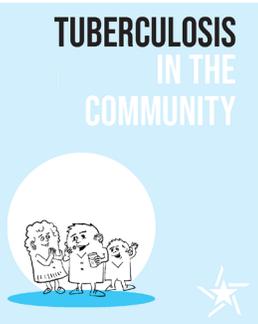
TB.BIT



NEW - TB Medications: Key Side Effects and Toxicities

Available for download!

A practical, quick reference educational tool designed to support healthcare professionals in the safe and effective management of TB pharmacotherapy. This resource outlines the most clinically significant adverse...
Download — [TB Medications: Key Side Effects and Toxicities](#)

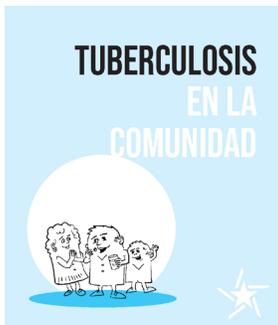


NEW - TB in the Community Patient Book English

Available for download!

This booklet was developed to help patients and new healthcare workers understand the essentials of tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis, testing, and treatment. It provides clear, straightforward information to support learning, improve confidence, and enhance education throughout the TB care and treatment process.

English Download—[TB in the Community Patient Book English](#)



NEW - TB in the Community Patient Book Spanish

Available for download!

This booklet was developed to help patients and new healthcare workers understand the essentials of tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis, testing, and treatment. It provides clear, straightforward information to support learning, improve confidence, and enhance education throughout the TB care and treatment process.

Spanish Download—[TB in the Community Patient Book Spanish](#)

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination—<http://cdc.gov/tb/>

TB COE's for Training, Education, and Medical Consultation—<https://www.cdc.gov/tb-programs/php/about/tb-coe.html>

Find TB Resources—<https://findtbresources.cdc.gov/>

National TB Controllers Association—<http://www.tbcontrollers.org>

Department of State Health Services - <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/tuberculosis-tb>

*If your organization has any additional links for TB resources that you would like published, please send them to phillip.ring@uttyler.edu



TRAININGS

2026 HNTC Training Calendar

Date(s)	Course	Location
March 24	World TB Day	Online
April 16	Screening and Treating Tuberculosis Infection	Midland
April 17	TST Practicum	Midland
April 29-May 1	Level 3 TB Nurse Case Management	Fort Worth
June 4	Pediatric TB Webcast Series 1: Adolescent TB	Online
August 20	Clinical Management of TB for Physicians	San Antonio
September 15-17	TB Contact Investigation Skills	Austin
September 17	Pediatric TB Webcast Series 2: Pediatric TB Radiology	Online
September 23-25	Level 3 TB Nurse Case Management	Edinburg
October 1	TB in Corrections Webcast	Online

**** Please refer to the website for any future trainings and detailed information. ****

Please visit our website heartlandntbc.org/training/

Proposed topics are subject to change. Please check our website for the latest updates.

**TRAININGS ARE POSTED TO THE WEBSITE AS
THEY ARE CONFIRMED**

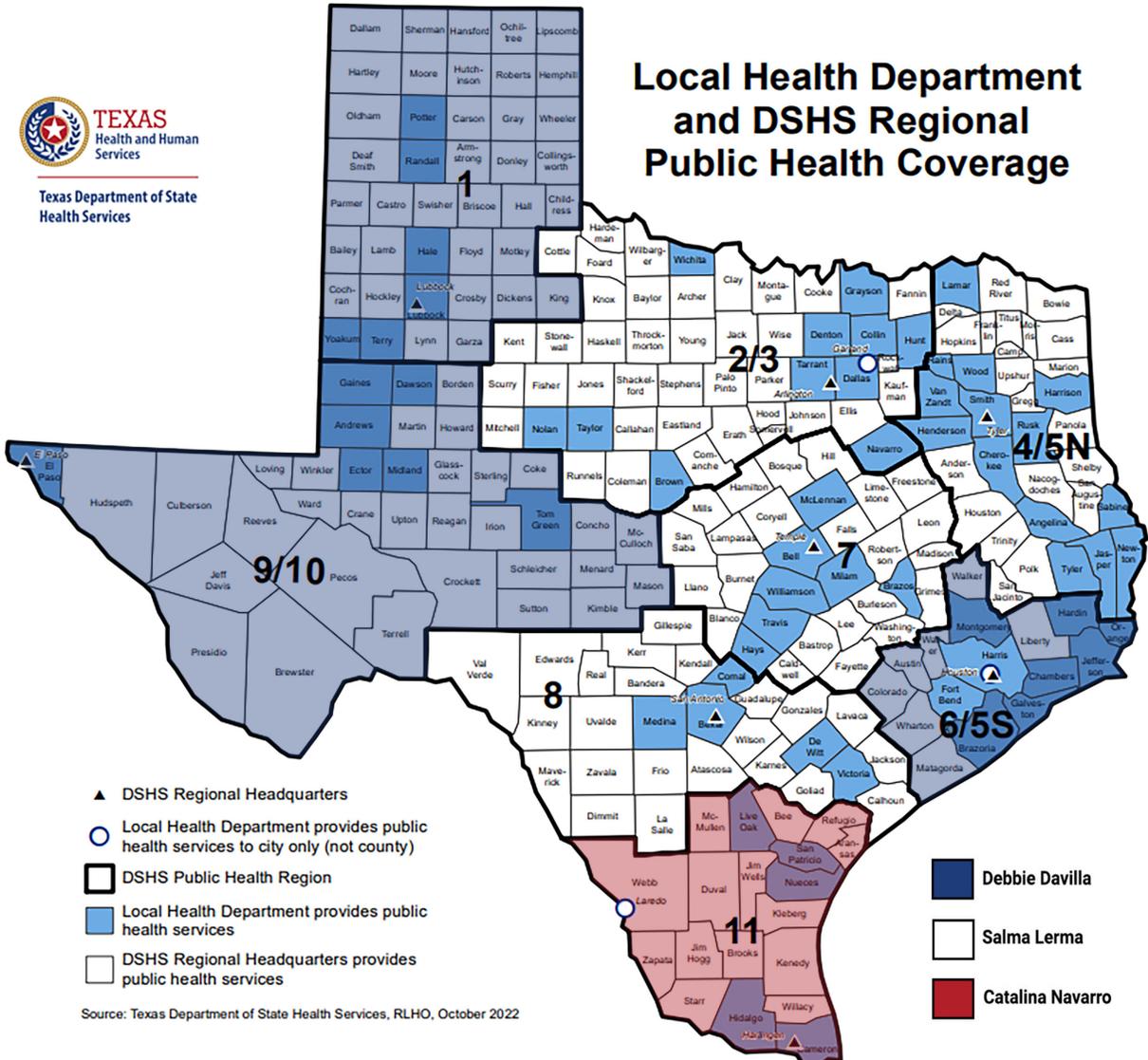
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Region Assignments per Nurse Consultant



Local Health Department and DSHS Regional Public Health Coverage



- ▲ DSHS Regional Headquarters
- Local Health Department provides public health services to city only (not county)
- DSHS Public Health Region
- Local Health Department provides public health services
- DSHS Regional Headquarters provides public health services

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, RLHO, October 2022

Debbie Davilla	Salma Lerma	Catalina Navarro
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Regions:
 PHR 1—Lubbock
 PHR 6/5 South—Houston
 PHR 9/10—El Paso

Regions:
 PHR 2/3—Arlington
 PHR 4/5 North—Tyler
 PHR 7—Temple
 PHR 8—San Antonio

Regions:
 PHR 11—Harlingen
 Binational Programs:
 • Esperanza y Amista
 • Grupo Sin Fronteras
 • Juntos Project
 • Los Dos Laredos

****For all Medical Consultation requests, please contact the HNTC designated nurse consultant for your region****



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The MISSION of Heartland National TB Center is to collaborate with public health partners throughout Texas to reduce the impact of TB through state-of-the-art training, innovative educational and consultative resources.

The VISION of Heartland National TB Center is to be the most patient-conscious, professional healthcare organization focused on TB elimination while supporting public health and private partners in our communities.