

SPH alumnus led Denton County Public Health's nationally-praised vaccine efforts in the charge against COVID-19

Denton County Public Health grabbed national attention in 2021 as one of the most successful COVID-19 vaccination hubs in the U.S.

Led by SPH graduate Dr. Matt Richardson, the department's service area covers more than 900,000 North Texas residents, although people came from states as far away as Pennsylvania to get their vaccines.

Dr. Richardson credits a good amount of Denton County Public Health's success to COVID response planning that started in January 2020, coupled with community partnerships and the department's experience in preparing for widespread emergencies dating back two decades ago to September 11, 2001.

Since then, his department advised Denton County through the national anthrax alerts of the early 2000s, the global SARS and H1N1 flu epidemic warnings, Ebola discovery and response in Dallas in 2014, West Nile and chikungunya mosquito virus monitoring, and other potential threats to the community's health and safety.

Dr. Richardson's team administered record-breaking numbers of drive-through COVID vaccines at the Texas Motor Speedway site in 2021.

"Our staff's commitment and performance ... is true public health mission work, and I hope when they finally put their heads on their pillows at night, they know how much they are making a difference," he said.



Photo credit: Jeff Woo, Denton Record-Chronicle

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