

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 20, 2022

**DHCHD Congratulates the First RNEC Graduating Class**

DALHART, TEXAS – Dallam Hartley Counties Hospital District is pleased to announce the graduation of the first Rural Nursing Education Consortium cohort.

Twenty-three nursing students completed the Associate Degree in Nursing program through the RNEC, a partnership between regional hospitals, Amarillo College and Frank Phillips College. Of those, six students were sponsored by Coon Memorial Hospital.

These students were pinned December 15 and graduated with their ADN December 16: Kollyn Bradley, Arlette Jimenez, Berenice Maturin, Zayra Maturin-Lopez, Logan Schaffner, and Astrid Torres.

“We are so proud of these nurses,” said Kiki Ralston, Chief Nursing Officer at Coon Memorial Hospital. “This program is good for the nurses, good for our hospital district, and good for the community. These students grew up here and are home grown. We can’t wait to watch this program grow in the future.”

RNEC coursework is uniquely delivered via face-to-face and distance learning technology, and students undertake clinical requirements at consortium-member hospitals like Coon Memorial Hospital. The Dalhart RNEC students were led by Chris Copley, Nursing Instructor at the FPC Rahll Campus in Dalhart.

“This program has been in the making for years,” said Copley. “And now for the first time, Coon Memorial Hospital and surrounding areas will gain nurses from this program. We will start up a new group of LVNs (RN students) in January, but I am very proud to announce the outstanding achievement these students have accomplished and am so proud of them. As part of the nursing profession, I am excited to see a plan that now results in a nursing shortage that has been a concern in providing adequate care to our patients in this community.”

Dallam Hartley Counties Hospital District, located in Dalhart, Texas, is a healthcare system designed to serve the community at every stage of life. Offering services including obstetrics, surgery, radiology, and swing bed at Coon Memorial Hospital, providing wellness and rehabilitation services at family practice or specialty clinics, or caring for seniors through long-term care facilities, DHCHD’s mission is to provide quality healthcare close to home. To learn more, visit [www.dhchd.org](http://www.dhchd.org).

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