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## TEXAS ACADEMY *of* FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MELISSA GERDES, M.D., SWORN IN AS TAFP PRESIDENT**

*SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS* — Melissa Gerdes, M.D., of Whitehouse, Texas, was sworn in as president of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians during the 61st Annual Session and Scientific Assembly in San Antonio. Dr. Gerdes assumed her duties July 24 at the annual Installation of Officers and Awards Lunch.

Dr. Gerdes is the current medical director of Trinity Clinic in Whitehouse, Texas, and a staff physician of family medicine at Mother Frances Hospital in Tyler, Texas. She has also served as a staff physician at the East Texas Medical Center and as the associate professor of medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Tyler.

In her inaugural presidential address, Dr. Gerdes told the audience that she will focus on five areas during her year as president: recognition and promotion of the specialty of family medicine, communication both between members and the larger public, continuing medical education, advocacy on behalf of family physicians, and primary care workforce development. These goals closely mirror the Academy's mission statement, which she helped craft.

Dr. Gerdes constantly works to improve family medicine and the quality of care for patients. Her practice was chosen by the American Academy of Family Physicians to participate in TransforMED, a practice redesign initiative created to train family physicians and their staff to make their practices more patient-centered and accessible. The two-year demonstration concluded in 2008 and TransforMED staff identified Dr. Gerdes' practice as one of the stars of the program for their hard work to meet patients' needs. Trinity Clinic will continue to serve as an example for other practices around the country.

Dr. Gerdes attended Northwestern University for her undergraduate degree and received her medical degree from the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine. She completed her family medicine residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Tyler.

As TAFP president, Dr. Gerdes will represent the entire Academy, amplifying the voice of family physicians. She will establish goals and objectives for the organization, and monitor and evaluate the organizational effectiveness and accomplishment of the 5,500

members. She will be accompanied by President-elect I. L. Balkcom, IV, M.D., of Sulphur Springs; Vice President Clare Hawkins, M.D., of Baytown; Treasurer Troy Fiesinger, M.D., of Sugar Land; and Parliamentarian Dale Ragle, M.D., of Dallas.

*The Texas Academy of Family Physicians is the premier membership organization dedicated to uniting the family doctors of Texas through advocacy, education and member services, and empowering them to provide a medical home for patients of all ages. It has 33 local chapters and is a chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Visit [www.tafp.org](http://www.tafp.org) for more information.*