

# Alumna Debra Houry announced as SPHTM graduation speaker

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Dr. Debra Houry (MD/MPH '98) will serve as the 2022 graduation speaker for the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. The school's graduation exercises will take place at three o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday, May 21, 2022, at the Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts.

“Dr. Houry is an ideal speaker for this year’s graduation ceremony” says Dr. Thomas LaVeist, dean of the school. “As acting principal deputy director for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Houry is in an ideal position to address a broad array of issues that impact the public’s health, including COVID-19, climate change, maternal mortality, community safety, and issues of equity in health and healthcare. I know she will have a lot to say to the graduating class of 2022.”

Houry served as an emergency physician for Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta as well as the director of the Emory Center for Injury Control. In 2014 she joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, before becoming the director of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Last fall she was named acting principal deputy director, second in command to Director Rochelle Walensky.

[In an article](#) posted soon after her appointment, she said, “Having public health engrained in my brain while in med school was invaluable,” she says. “Public health and clinical medicine are really important, and Tulane combined them. If it hadn’t been a [combined degree](#), I don’t know if I would’ve gotten my public health degree. And that was a career changer for me.”

At the graduation ceremony, LaVeist will honor Houry with the Creighton Wellman Medal. Wellman was the founding dean of the school and, therefore, the first dean of a school of public health in the United States.