

[Dr. Rachel Levine speaks at Tulane School of Medicine diploma ceremony](#)

May 10, 2021 1:15 PM Carolyn Scofield
cscofiel@tulane.edu



Rachel Levine, MD (pictured here at an unrelated event), the new assistant secretary for health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, served as the 2021 keynote speaker at Tulane School of Medicine diploma ceremony. Levine, who graduated from Tulane medical school in 1983, delivered her address virtually.

Rachel Levine, MD, the new assistant secretary for health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, virtually returned to her alma mater as the keynote speaker for the Tulane University School of Medicine diploma ceremony on May 22, 2021. Levine has been a trailblazer throughout her professional career, most

recently by becoming the first openly transgender federal official to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

“COVID-19 has been and continues to be the biggest public health crisis of the past century, impacting all of us in so many ways. A lesson of the pandemic is that we are all interconnected, and we need to ensure that a healthier future includes eliminating health disparities and promoting health equity,” Levine said prior to her address. “Starting with my time at Tulane, I’ve been fortunate to continue learning so much throughout my career. I look forward to sharing some of my stories and experiences with the next generation as they become doctors, researchers and innovators — ushering in a brighter future for our country and the world.”

Levine graduated from Tulane in 1983 and worked as a pediatrician, adolescent medicine specialist, and professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center for many years before her appointment as the state’s physician general. She specialized in treating young people with psychological issues such as eating disorders, and much of her work crosses disciplines by focusing on the intersection of medical issues and behavioral health.

“It’s a tremendous honor to have Dr. Levine speak to our graduating students,” said Dr. Lee Hamm, Tulane’s senior vice president and dean of the School of Medicine. “We strive to teach all of our students to go out in the world and make positive changes, and that’s exactly what Dr. Levine has done during the entirety of her career. It is only fitting that she returns to inspire the next generation of medical professionals and scientists.”

The School of Medicine diploma ceremony was held at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Levine’s keynote speech was delivered virtually.

[Watch the ceremony here.](#) The introduction of Dr. Levine begins around the 53:30 mark.