

UAMS News Bureau

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**Zoe Weeks of Jonesboro Receives \$10,000 Arkansas Mutual
Scholarship to Pursue Rural Primary Care**

LITTLE ROCK — Zoe Weeks of Jonesboro has been awarded the \$10,000 Arkansas Mutual Medical Student Award, a scholarship for third-year medical students at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) who want to practice primary care in rural Arkansas.

Weeks, a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and the University of Missouri-St. Louis, first pursued a career in teaching and decided to switch to medicine after spending a summer in the Delta and seeing the health care challenges there.

“Throughout my time in education working in underserved communities, I found the challenges facing our rural communities to be particularly unique and intertwined with so many other barriers, like access to health care,” Weeks said. “This is why I came to medical school, and I hope to one day be a part of a bigger solution that focuses on improved health care access and preventive medicine in rural Arkansas.”

Weeks plans to return to northeast Arkansas to practice either family medicine or pediatrics, particularly in one of Poinsett, Craighead or Jackson counties, where her family is deeply connected: her father is a produce broker, her mother is an agricultural entomologist, and her husband is involved in rural agriculture.

“I am very passionate about rural development, particularly in the Delta, and believe that health care access expansion is critical to the future success of our community,” Weeks said.

Corey Little, president of Arkansas Mutual Insurance Co., the only medical liability insurance provider headquartered in Arkansas, said the company continues to commit its resources to improving rural health care in the state.

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“As an Arkansas company, we’re thrilled to provide this scholarship to Zoe,” Little said. “Her passion and commitment regarding quality health care in rural Arkansas is exactly what Arkansas Mutual had in mind when we established this scholarship five years ago.”

More than two-thirds of Arkansas’ counties include federally designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas. Primary care physician shortages are projected to increase substantially as the state’s population continues to age and require more medical care, and as more Arkansans, now insured as a result of health system reform, seek primary care services.

“The College of Medicine is very pleased to award the Arkansas Mutual Scholarship to Zoe Weeks,” said Christopher T. Westfall, M.D., executive vice chancellor of UAMS and dean of the College of Medicine. “Zoe clearly shares our commitment to improving access to high-quality primary care for all Arkansans and especially those in underserved rural areas and smaller communities.”

Westfall also thanked Arkansas Mutual for the company’s ongoing support. “Scholarships help us attract the very best students to UAMS, and this scholarship is especially helpful because of its focus on students who intend to practice primary care where they are needed most.”

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospital; northwest Arkansas regional campus; statewide network of regional centers; and six institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging and Translational Research Institute. It is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 2,727 students, 822 medical residents and five dental residents. It is the state’s largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses throughout the state, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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