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**Largest-ever number of UAMS Medical Students Matched
with Residency Positions**

LITTLE ROCK — With its largest class of graduating medical students about to begin their medical residencies, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) is helping expand access to health care across the state, helped in part by new residency programs.

Senior medical students are matched with a residency of three to seven years depending on their specialty through a national process revealed simultaneously across the country each March on Match Day.

This year, 160 UAMS students were appointed to residencies, the largest-ever number of UAMS graduates matching. Every student who wanted a match received one.

“We are so proud of our graduates,” said UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. “Students got into really good programs, both those who matched in state and those who matched out of state.”

In addition to the large number matching, 95 percent found a position in the original match, the largest percentage since 2006. Subsequent processes were able to find positions for the remaining 5 percent.

One of UAMS’ goals is to inspire doctors to stay in Arkansas for their careers, particularly those in primary care. Of the class of 2019, 72 seniors have taken residency positions in Arkansas. The remaining 88 took positions in 32 different states.

This year, 53 percent of the UAMS students matched in primary care — internal medicine, pediatrics, family medicine or obstetrics/gynecology. In internal medicine, 32 matched, the largest number since 2006.

Several UAMS students received appointments in the new Baptist-UAMS family medicine and internal medicine residency programs at Baptist Health North Little Rock.

“This is certainly a positive development in the effort to get more physicians to train in Arkansas and remain in the state to practice,” said College of Medicine Dean Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.

An increasing physician shortage nationwide and in Arkansas led medical schools across the country to increase class sizes starting about 10 years ago. In a rural state like Arkansas, the physician shortage is especially critical since more than two-thirds of the state’s 75 counties include federally designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas.

Residency positions are funded primarily by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The agency has not increased the number of residency slots in many years for hospitals that already have programs, leading many medical schools to come up with other ways of financing more slots to accommodate the increasing number of medical school graduates.

But hospitals that have never had a residency program may apply for one. That’s what led to new residency slots with Baptist Health North Little Rock and hospitals in Searcy and Batesville.

In 2018, UAMS partnered with Baptist Health to open two programs in North Little Rock, leading to 12 new slots each for the first year of both family medicine and internal medicine residency programs. The three-year programs may apply for CMS funding for the final two years. UAMS also assisted Searcy and Batesville with obtaining residencies.

“Our mission is to provide physicians for Arkansas and our goal is to generate as many positions as we can, whether it’s at UAMS or other sites in the state,” Westfall said.

Match Day is conducted by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP). Students in their fourth year apply to programs, interview and then send a ranked list to the NRMP. Residency programs also submit a list of preferred candidates, and an NRMP computer, using an algorithm, reconciles the lists as best as possible.

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven 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, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. It is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 2,727 students, 870 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, 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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