

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS Arkansas Geriatric Education Collaborative Awarded
\$3.7 Million by Health Resources and Services Administration**

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Geriatric Education Collaborative (AGEC) at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received a five-year grant of \$3.74 million to provide geriatric training.

The funding will provide training for geriatric health care professionals, primary care practitioners, first responders, caregivers, older adults and those who provide services to older adults. Robin McAtee, Ph.D., assistant professor in the UAMS College of Medicine Department of Geriatrics, leads the collaborative.

“The grant will enhance and expand training and education to improve care for older Arkansans,” McAtee said. “We will address gaps in health care information for older adults and promote age-friendly health systems and dementia friendly communities while working with community-based organizations to assist them to work more effectively with the older adults they serve.”

Arkansas faces immense challenges in its health care delivery system that stem from a high proportion of low-income elderly who have limited access to health care. Arkansas is a rural state in which 73 of 75 counties have medically underserved populations.

“Through education and training of faculty and other health professionals practicing and living in rural, medically underserved areas, we can improve the quality of care provided to older adults and the wonderful individuals who tend to them,” said Jeanne Wei, M.D., Ph.D., director of the UAMS Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging.

The collaborative will continue to work with multiple partners at colleges and state universities as well as community-based organizations operating in all the regions of Arkansas.

“Together, we are stronger. The collaboration with multiple and diverse community based organizations and universities throughout the state will help us reach more individuals to support healthy aging and improve the quality of care provided to older adults,” McAtee said.

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All programs are free to health professionals and the community through funding of the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program grant.

“One of the best parts of our grant is the ability to provide programs on location by request for large groups and through community-based organizations throughout the state,” McAtee said.

The programs will provide education and training programs covering Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, elder justice, older adults and opioid use/misuse, chronic pain, diabetes management, physical activity/exercise, healthy cooking, and many others.

A variety of methods will be used, including web-based training, live streaming, free continuing education programs, interactive videos, social media health communications, podcasts, storytelling, support groups, caregiver workshops, older adult special topic educational forums and educational print materials.

Other main objectives include working with rural primary care providers to improve their geriatric knowledge and practices and partnering with community leaders to make their communities more age and dementia-friendly.

Since 2015, the collaborative has provided geriatric training to improve health outcomes and the quality of health care for elderly Arkansans through research, education and training. In the past four years, the collaborative has provided programs to over 15,000 health professionals and students and to over 19,000 lay individuals throughout Arkansas.

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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