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**News Release
July 3, 2019**

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**NIH Awards Five-Year, \$24.2 Million Grant
to UAMS Translational Research Institute**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Translational Research Institute announced today it will receive five years of federal funding totaling \$24.2 million to accelerate research that addresses Arkansas' biggest health challenges-

The Translational Research Institute helps researchers turn their ideas and findings into new medical treatments and other health interventions. Its focus is on rural Arkansas populations, where health and health care disparities persist. A major emphasis of the award is research partnerships with Arkansas communities to ensure that research supported by the institute aligns with the priorities and needs of Arkansans.

“This funding recognizes the outstanding research occurring right here in Arkansas,” said U.S. Senator John Boozman. “It will help UAMS researchers build on their successes and develop new therapies and medical procedures that will improve lives in Arkansas and beyond. I was pleased to support the efforts of UAMS to secure this funding, but this award truly is a testament to the body of work produced by UAMS. Arkansans can be proud of all UAMS has accomplished and its bright future that lies ahead.”

The new funding, called a Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA), comes from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). UAMS is one of more than 50 CTSA Program sites in the United States. The institute first received CTSA funding in 2009.

“Competition for these awards is fierce, so having a CTSA means we’ve shown UAMS to be among the country’s leading research innovators,” said UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. “For Arkansans, this award is significant because it will translate to improved health and health care. The university also thanks Sen. Boozman for his important help in achieving this result.”

The CTSA award includes a main grant and two training grants. Laura James, M.D., is the principal investigator on the primary Translational Research Institute grant, which totals \$20.6 million, and provides research infrastructure and oversight for the entire CTSA program.

“A CTSA is among the most significant NIH awards an institution can receive,” said James, also institute director and UAMS associate vice chancellor for clinical and translational research. “We are thrilled over this award because it represents the collective effort of numerous faculty members working across diverse research programs. This award demonstrates the synergy and strengths of research talents at UAMS. In addition, the CTSA will harmonize our efforts as health care providers and researchers to improve the health outcomes of Arkansans through research innovations.”

“We are also very proud that this opportunity allows us to work closer with our partner institutions, Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH), Arkansas Children’s Research Institute (ACRI) and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS), as well as the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus, to expand the impact of research throughout the state,” James said.

The institute is supporting novel research that addresses significant health issues in Arkansas, such as opioids and pain management, diabetes and obesity, mental health and rare diseases. It is also expanding opportunities for UAMS researchers to participate in multisite clinical trials, including cross-CTSA research opportunities.

“The Translational Research Institute has created a collaborative cross-campus and cross-CTSA environment that enables our researchers to thrive,” said Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D., UAMS vice chancellor for research. “The funding is important, and the prestige of being part of the CTSA Program helps us recruit the best researchers nationally.”

The two other grants that are part of the award include the Institutional Career Development Core grant totaling \$2.3 million, led by Mary Aitken, M.D., and Brooks Gentry, M.D.; and the National Research Service Award Training Core, \$1.3 million, led by Nancy Rusch, Ph.D.

The new funding will enable important new and existing efforts to continue, including:

- Providing the public with easier access to cutting-edge clinical trials.
- Increasing the number of clinical trials offered at UAMS, ACH, and CAVHS.
- Pilot grants for the best translational research ideas for improving health and health care.
- Education and translational science training for early career researchers.
- Entrepreneurship training to help researchers commercialize their ideas.
- Implementation science training to identify and adopt the most successful approaches and the latest medical advances.
- Supporting team-based collaborations at the local and national level.
- Increasing partnerships with diverse communities to ensure the most meaningful clinical and translational research is conducted with rural populations.
- Streamlining translational research processes and enhancing research quality with state-of-the-art informatics approaches and methods.
- Adopting “plain language” communications to ensure research opportunities and findings are disseminated broadly to the public.

In preparation for the award, UAMS developed a number of new research approaches that will help expand research opportunities in the future, including:

- ARresearch.org, a volunteer research participant registry and website, providing researchers a pool of nearly 6,000 potential research volunteers.
- Expanding researcher access to de-identified patient data that can be used to understand disease patterns and that provide a framework to guide studies testing new research treatments or approaches.
- Expansion of cross-institutional collaborations with multiple other CTSA programs across the U.S.
- Expansion of study management tools and resources, to ensure that research is conducted according to the highest standards of quality and reproducibility.
- Creation of a Community Scientist Academy, to provide in-depth training for the public on clinical research and to provide service and decision-making opportunities for the public.
- Expansion of its Community Advisory Board, ensuring that its diverse, grassroots stakeholders have a voice in the institute's efforts.
- An efficient, cost-saving electronic service request system for researchers, which allows them to select from a menu of over 30 unique services and receive customized help with research-related tasks.

In addition to partnerships with ACH/ACRI and the CAVHS, the institute fosters research collaborations across all UAMS colleges – Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health, as well as the UAMS Graduate School. The National Research Service Award Training Core, led by Rusch, involves a training partnership with the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

The NCATS/NIH award is under Award Number U54TR001629.

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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