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**UAMS Researchers Awarded \$600,000 Grant to Evaluate the  
Pulaski County Regional Crisis Stabilization Unit**

LITTLE ROCK — Researchers at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) have received a \$600,000 grant to study the Pulaski County Regional Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU).

Arnold Ventures awarded the three-year grant to Nick Zaller, Ph.D., professor in the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health and Melissa Zielinski, Ph.D., assistant professor in the UAMS College of Medicine; who will serve as co-principal investigators.

The project will follow patients for two years to evaluate individual and regional outcomes of the Pulaski County Regional CSUs availability and engagement.

Crisis Stabilization Units are used to aid in jail diversion for people experiencing behavioral health issues who come in contact with law enforcement due to a mental health crisis.

“The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. Research shows that people who become incarcerated are often struggling to manage mental illness and addiction. CSUs offer an opportunity to provide people with treatment, rather than contribute to already unsustainable rates of confinement,” said Zielinski.

“This is the first time a grant like this has been awarded in Arkansas,” said Zaller. “The funding will allow us to fill a gap in the research on short- and long-term patient-level outcomes for evaluating Crisis Stabilization Units.”

The project will recruit 200 individuals in collaboration with CSU clinical staff. Once recruited, research technicians will meet with patients to conduct a baseline assessment.

Participants will complete in-person assessments on six occasions — one week, one month, three months, six months and 12 months. Assessments will track participants' symptoms, health service utilization and justice involvement over time. The team hopes to also identify barriers to accessing community-based services and support, information that can be used to guide future services.

A formal cost analysis for all participants will also be conducted during year three of the project. "Intervention cost in relation to outcomes will allow for more appropriate decision making and provide a basis for action," said Zaller.

The Pulaski County Regional CSU is one of four pilot programs in Arkansas authorized in 2017 by Act 423, which provided funding to establish the crisis units and train officers to effectively deflect persons from jail who would be better served in the community.

"Persons with behavioral health issues often encounter police for non-criminal reasons. Placing them in jail creates a financial burden on the community and does not provide the individual with much-needed mental health services," said Dr. Lisa Evans, clinical director of the Pulaski County Regional Crisis Stabilization Unit. "The Pulaski County Regional CSU also treats people referred by the community mental health system, aiming to completely deflect persons from encountering law enforcement and ensuring that they do not become entrenched in the justice system."

Other researchers involved with the grant include James Selig, Ph.D., associate professor; Mick Tilford, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management; both in the College of Public Health.

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. *U.S. News & World Report* named UAMS Medical Center the state's Best Hospital; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide; and named six areas as high performing — cancer, colon cancer surgery, heart failure, hip replacement, knee replacement and lung cancer surgery. 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](http://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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