

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release**  
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**Erika Petersen, M.D., Selected to Lead National Clinical Trial  
on Painful Diabetic Neuropathy**

LITTLE ROCK — Erika Petersen, M.D., a neurosurgeon and researcher at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), has been named the lead investigator for a major national clinical trial exploring a unique treatment for a painful chronic diabetic foot condition.

The trial will test whether high frequency spinal cord stimulation is an effective treatment for painful diabetic neuropathy, a type of nerve damage caused by diabetes that results in severe pain and numbness in the hands and feet. About 4 million diabetic patients have painful diabetic neuropathy in the U.S. Spinal cord stimulation is a technique for treating pain that involves surgically implanting a device epidurally. Thin wires carry electrical current from the device to the spinal cord, providing therapeutic stimulation to the nerves in the area where the pain is felt.

The company sponsoring the trial, Nevro Corp., has been investigating whether the Senza® SCS system could also be effective for treating painful diabetic neuropathy. Nevro is a global medical device company focused on providing innovative products that improve the quality of life of patients suffering from debilitating chronic pain.

Petersen, an associate professor in the Department of Neurosurgery in the UAMS College of Medicine, has led the UAMS portion the research.





“Dr. Petersen’s performance in the study has been exemplary,” said David Caraway, M.D., Ph.D., chief medical officer of Nevro Corp. “Dr. Petersen has demonstrated tremendous leadership of her team through robust study recruitment, careful patient selection, and efficient movement of subjects through the protocol. As the lead principal investigator, Dr. Petersen will be the first author of the primary endpoint analysis report and will represent the investigators at many conference presentations of the study data.”

The company also applauded the contributions of UAMS sub-investigators Heejung Choi, M.D., Chris Paul, M.D., and Johnathan Goree, M.D., of the Department of Anesthesiology; neuropsychological assessments by Jennifer Kleiner, Ph.D., and

Jennifer Gess, Ph.D., of the Department of Psychiatry; and research support services provided by the Translational Research Institute.

About a quarter of Americans with diabetes have painful diabetic neuropathy, according to published data. In Arkansas, where an estimated 363,000 people have type 2 diabetes, about 73,000 of those (20%) would be expected to have painful diabetic neuropathy. The number could be higher — a study conducted in five rural Arkansas counties concluded that painful diabetic neuropathy was alarmingly underdiagnosed.

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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