

**UAMS News Bureau**

Office of Communications & Marketing  
4301 West Markham # 890  
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

uamshealth.com/news



**News Release**  
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**Media Contacts:**

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998  
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260  
[leslie@uams.edu](mailto:leslie@uams.edu)

Liz Caldwell, 501-686-8995  
Wireless phone: 501-350-4364  
[liz@uams.edu](mailto:liz@uams.edu)

**UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation Awarded  
\$4 Million Grant to Help Sexual Assault Victims**

LITTLE ROCK — A new digital health program to provide the expertise of sexual assault nurse examiners to rural hospital emergency departments recently received funding through a \$4 million, federal grant to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Institute for Digital Health & Innovation.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime awarded the three-year grant to the institute for a pilot study of its new Digital Health Sexual Assault Assessment Program.

Using real-time, interactive video consultations with nurse examiners, the program’s goals are to:

- Increase access and improve the quality of sexual assault forensic examinations and follow-up services in areas without access to nurse examiners.
- Expand training and outreach to promote awareness of sexual assault and the availability of sexual assault nurse examiners in rural communities.

“A core value of the program is its ability to better inform law enforcement and the judicial system professionals through the improvements in the examination of sexual assault victims,” said Curtis Lowery, M.D., director of the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. “Doing that will help lead to more successful prosecutions of assailants as well as justice for sexual assault victims. This is yet another example of one of the many new ways digital health technology can be applied to assist in areas it hasn’t before.”

Sexual assault nurse examiners working in the program will assist local Emergency Departments in collecting forensic evidence, counseling victims, ensuring victim’s continued safety and connecting victims to resources for additional help.

“The program’s final product will be a statewide telehealth sexual assault program in a predominantly rural setting that can be modeled and copied across the United States and

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used across hospitals, clinics, schools, universities, shelters and crisis centers,” said Tina Benton, B.S.N., the institute’s executive director of development.

UAMS e-Link, the statewide digital health network, will provide protected communications for consultations and for securely sharing images of victims who require transfer to other hospitals for additional medical care.

A program work group will meet to provide guidance on policy, procedures and emerging issues in digital health. It also will work to mobilize new Sexual Assault Response Teams in underserved regions of 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. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS’ clinical enterprise including its hospital, regional clinics and clinics it operates or staffs in cooperation with other providers. UAMS 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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