

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS Students Working to Collect Personal Protective
Equipment for Health Care Workers**

LITTLE ROCK – Students from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in both central Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas are collecting personal protective equipment (PPE) to distribute to health care workers throughout the state.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a critical national shortage of masks, surgical gowns and eye gear desperately needed by doctors, nurses and other front-line medical workers across the United States. Without proper PPE, these health care workers treating patients with COVID-19 are at high risk for contracting the virus.

The student team in central Arkansas is made up of 35 medical students. The Northwest Arkansas group, which has combined its efforts with an overall initiative by the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus, consists of eight medical students, one nurse practitioner student, and one pharmacy student.

“As medical students, we felt acutely aware of the struggle medical providers are facing during this COVID-19 crisis,” said Shelby Webb, a third-year medical student on the UAMS Northwest Campus. “We are not alone in that we personally know many who are on the frontlines risking their lives and in need of vital personal protective equipment.

Sophia Ly, a first-year medical student at UAMS in Little Rock, said she and other medical students wanted to do anything they could to help.

“I wanted to find a way to contribute to the medical field during this pandemic,” Ly said, “but I felt limited by being only a medical student. In addition to seeing this as a way to help out, I wanted to bring together my classmates and the public community to make a difference. I hope to keep pushing this effort forward with the rest of my team and am grateful for each donation we have received from the community, no matter how big or small.”

“There is a lot of fear and anxiety amidst this pandemic,” said Zoey Crystal, another third-year medical student on the UAMS Northwest Campus. “It has been our desire that, by providing PPE to hospitals in the area, we can bring renewed hope to our community

as a whole. We have been incredibly encouraged by how our communities have banded together to make this effort successful so far, exemplifying the true spirit of community that will help us all as we support and protect each other during this time.”

There are a number of businesses and organizations who use PPE in their daily operations and may not have a need for them right now. These include beauty supply stores, med spas, hair and nail salons, tattoo parlors, home improvement and hardware stores, dry cleaners, paint stores, pet groomers, veterinarians and dentists. The students have been contacting these businesses and organizations to explain the need and ask for donations.

The PPE items most needed include:

- N95 respirators
- Surgical masks
- Face shields
- Surgical gowns
- Non-latex exam gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes
- Sterile swabs for sample collection (dacron or nylon tipped – not cotton)

In just a few weeks, the central Arkansas group has collected 44,340 gloves, 578 N95 masks, 550 surgical masks, 66 pairs of goggles, 113 gowns and more than 1,200 handmade masks and face shields. In Northwest Arkansas, total collections include 54,752 gloves, 1,129 N95 masks, 5,600 masks, 27 pairs of goggles and 304 gowns. The groups are also collecting hand sanitizer, bleach, isopropyl alcohol, cleaning solution and wipes.

These items are being redirected to hospitals where there is the greatest need.

“UAMS Northwest Campus leadership holds regular phone calls with our community health care partners to assess needs and shortages,” said Jay Gandy, Ph.D., associate provost for the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus. “We will deliver these items wherever there is the greatest need. We are very proud of these students for independently taking the initiative to do this. They saw a need in their community and stepped up to help.”

There are a number of ways for organizations, businesses or individuals to make a donation. Volunteers will even come pick up your items if you cannot deliver them.

In Northwest Arkansas, email NWInfo@uams.edu or call (479) 713-8103. In central Arkansas, email medsupplydrivear@gmail.com.

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.

The UAMS Northwest Regional Campus includes 250 medical, pharmacy, nursing and health professions students, 50 medical and pharmacy residents, and 1,000 community-based faculty. The campus has nine clinics including a student-led clinic and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Faculty conduct research to reduce health disparities. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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