

UAMS News Bureau

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**Walmart Foundation Funding Will Help UAMS, Arkansas
Community Foundation Address Gaps in Food Access and
Health Care Services During COVID-19**

FAYETTEVILLE – With funding from the Walmart Foundation, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Northwest Regional Campus is working with the Arkansas Community Foundation to address gaps in food access. The funding will also help UAMS address gaps in health care services in underserved populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UAMS received a \$375,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to help address gaps in health care access. Part of the grant will allow UAMS to set up translation services for its HealthNow hotline that provides patients in Arkansas real-time access to a health care provider via video chat using a smartphone, tablet or computer.

A separate \$500,000 grant to the Arkansas Community Foundation from the Walmart Foundation will help expedite a coordinated response to food insecurity by establishing the Northwest Arkansas Equitable Food Response and Relief fund, which UAMS will direct. Through that fund, UAMS will coordinate grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to organizations working to address COVID-19-related food insecurity in Washington, Benton, Madison and Carroll counties. This is a rapid response funding opportunity and is available for quick disbursement and utilization.

UAMS will collect and review the applications and advise in the funding of community projects improving access to healthy food. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until the fund is depleted. Interested community organizations may apply online at <https://northwestcampus.uams.edu/chr/projects/response-and-relief/>.

“The ripple effects of the pandemic’s impact on our health and economy will place thousands of additional individuals in a state of food insecurity,” said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., vice chancellor for the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus. “It will also disproportionately affect individuals and families at higher risk of food insecurity, including those who are lower income, lower mobility, living in rural areas and those facing chronic illnesses. We are grateful to the Walmart Foundation for the funds to address these disparities during this critical time,”

UAMS will monitor changing situations related to food insecurity in the region and will work with community organizations and the Arkansas Community Foundation to quickly respond.

“At Walmart, we're committed to helping connect people in need with food and other services, especially during the pandemic when situations are intensified,” said Erin Hogue, director of community operations and Northwest Arkansas giving for Walmart.org. “We're proud to support UAMS and Arkansas Community Foundation in their effort to increase health-related services and food access for underserved populations in Northwest Arkansas.”

A team from the UAMS Office of Community Health and Research, led by Emily English, Dr.P.H., M.P.S., and Christopher Long, Ph.D., and located at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville, will serve as the coordinator of the food insecurity need and response efforts.

“Daily changes in the community’s needs and organizations’ response capacity require a coordinated effort to collect information and rapidly respond,” said Long, an assistant professor in the UAMS College of Medicine. “UAMS is committed to ensuring a coordinated and equitable response for all during this crisis.”

About UAMS

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](#).

About Arkansas Community Foundation

Arkansas Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that fosters smart giving to improve communities. The Community Foundation offers tools to help Arkansans protect, grow and direct their charitable dollars as they learn more about community needs. By making grants and sharing knowledge, the Community Foundation supports

charitable programs that work for Arkansas and partners to create new initiatives that address the gaps. Since 1976, the Community Foundation has provided more than \$220 million in grants and partnered with thousands of Arkansans to help them improve our neighborhoods, our towns and our entire state. Contributions to the Community Foundation, its funds and any of its 28 affiliates are fully tax deductible.

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