

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS Medical Center Named Center of Excellence
for Obstetric Anesthesia**

LITTLE ROCK — The Division of Obstetric Anesthesia in the College of Medicine Department of Anesthesiology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has been designated a Center of Excellence by the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP).

This prestigious status is awarded to institutions that demonstrate the highest standards of obstetric anesthesia care. UAMS is the only center in Arkansas with the designation.

Nationally, UAMS Medical Center joins the ranks of hospitals like Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Stanford, New York Presbyterian, Tufts, Duke and NYU.

“The criteria are designed to push obstetric anesthesia forward and improve standards across the nation,” said Nadir Sharawi, M.D., chief of the Division of Obstetric Anesthesia at UAMS. “To meet the standards takes more than one doctor or the ability to perform cesarean or labor deliveries or manage high-risk pregnancies – it requires a system of personnel, equipment, protocols, policies, training, emergency response, quality assurance, patient follow-up, and the ability to implement the latest guidelines. It signifies systemwide excellence that is more than the sum of the individual parts.”

The SOAP COE designation requires the physical presence of a board-certified anesthesiologist on the labor and delivery unit 24/7. Jill Mhyre, M.D., chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and an obstetric anesthesiologist, said UAMS has achieved this milestone.

“When our anesthesiology faculty and residents are assigned to the labor and delivery unit, they can focus 100% on obstetric care,” Mhyre said. “Our teams work continuously with the nurses, nurse midwives, obstetricians, maternal fetal medicine specialists, pediatricians and neonatologists to keep our mothers and babies safe and our moms comfortable. Ultimately, the result is better patient care.”

Nirvana Manning, M.D., clinical director of the Women’s Health Service Line, agreed that interdisciplinary cooperation underpins the program’s success.

“We have the most comprehensive team of experts – backed up by the facilities, technology and latest practices – to serve the pregnant women of Arkansas, from your everyday delivery to the most complicated cases.”

The Obstetric Anesthesia team includes Nadir Sharawi, M.D.; Jill Mhyre, M.D.; Caroline Martinello, M.D.; Faiza Khan, M.D.; and Matt Williams, M.D. The UAMS obstetrics and nursing teams are also key players, including Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology faculty members Nirvana Manning, M.D.; Dora Smith, M.D.; and Adam Sandlin, M.D.; Service Line Nursing Director Michelle McFail and Clinical Services Manager Melony Stokes.

UAMS is also a Maternal Safety Foundation Center of Excellence for the pregnancy complication placenta accreta and employs the only fellowship-trained obstetric anesthesiologists in the state. The Maternal-Fetal Medicine Program at UAMS features the most highly trained and experienced specialists in treating high-risk pregnancy in Arkansas.

SOAP describes its Center of Excellence criteria as covering all aspects of obstetric anesthesia care, as determined by expert consensus and evidence-based recommendations from the society’s members. The designation remains valid for four years.

“Congratulations to the Obstetric Anesthesia team at UAMS for receiving this well-deserve SOAP COE designation and for providing excellence in obstetric anesthesia care. Together, our Centers of Excellence are raising the bar for quality of care,” said Brendan Carvalho, MBBCh, director of the SOAP COE program.

SOAP is the leading professional organization in North America for obstetric anesthesia and perinatology. SOAP brings together physician obstetric anesthesiologists, CRNAs, maternal fetal medicine experts and perinatologists to develop best practices for clinical care and cutting-edge research. Its mission is to improve the pregnancy-related outcomes of women and neonates through the support of obstetric anesthesiology research, the provision of education to its members, other providers, and pregnant women, and the promotion of excellence in clinical anesthetic care.

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,

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