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**UAMS to Conduct COVID-19 Contact Tracing
for Arkansas Colleges and Universities**

LITTLE ROCK — The Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and UAMS Northwest Regional Campus have been authorized by the Arkansas Department of Health to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing for public and private colleges and universities in Arkansas.

The project is in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Arkansas Department of Health.

“Our goal is to protect the students and employees on each of these campuses,” said Jay Gandy, Ph.D., associate provost and project lead for the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus. “This group effort will allow us to control the spread of the coronavirus pandemic among the higher education institutions in Arkansas.”

Contact tracing is how public health officials track the spread of an infectious disease. If a person is confirmed to have COVID-19, they isolate themselves so they don’t spread the illness. Public health officials contact these people to help them recall who they’ve been in contact with while they are infectious. Then those people are contacted and asked to quarantine themselves to stop further spread.

The effort is supported by \$5 million in federal coronavirus aid that was allocated by the by the Arkansas Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act Steering Committee created by Gov. Asa Hutchinson.

The project will involve establishing two contact tracing centers, one in central Arkansas and one in northwest Arkansas. The work will be done by 75 contact tracers, two center directors, and an assistant center director.

“As colleges begin going back to school in August, we want to change the norms and behaviors of these students,” said Ben Amick, Ph.D., associate dean for research and project lead for the College of Public Health. “That will be the only way to ensure that students are following social distancing practices, wearing masks, and taking other COVID-19 precautions.”

The college has developed a website for resources, materials and best practices. Also, UAMS, Arkansas Department of Health, and Arkansas Department of Higher Education officials are working closely with each institution to ensure their preparedness plans are in place and proper precautions are taken if a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19.

“Contact tracing this population presents unique challenges that require creative solutions,” said Maria Markham, Ph.D., director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. “The partnership between the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Department of Health, UAMS, and these public and private institutions will leverage our individual expertise and collective effort. I am grateful for a collaboration focused on shortening the process of identifying and notifying contacts associated with our students and employees.”

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 or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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