

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS Receives \$2.5 Million CDC Grant
to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening in Arkansas**

LITTLE ROCK — The Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received \$2.5 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a five-year project to increase colorectal cancer screening in Arkansas.

Partnerships in Colorectal Cancer Screening in Arkansas is a project of the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine's Community Health and Education Division. Alysia Dubriske, director of Community Health and Education at UAMS, is leading the program and managing the grant.

Arkansas ranks near the bottom of the list at 34th in the nation for the number of people per capita who are screened annually for colorectal cancer. Nationwide, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths when men and women are combined.

The American Cancer Society predicts 1,540 Arkansans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2020 and 610 will die of the disease. According to CDC guidelines, people over the age of 50 should be screened annually for colorectal cancer, and people with a family history of the disease should start at a younger age.

"This grant allows us to address these disparities in Arkansas by working with both health care providers and the public," Dubriske said. "We will educate providers on evidence-based approaches for increasing colorectal cancer screening and then partner with them to implement those interventions. This will be supported by a communication campaign directed at the public so they better understand the importance of screening."

The approaches include automatic reminders for health care providers to touch base with patients who are overdue for screenings, increasing public awareness about screening through media and communication efforts, and reducing structural barriers that allow Arkansans in rural areas access to prevention, early stage diagnosis, and treatment.

The program will target primary care clinics, especially in counties with low screening rates and low average household incomes. The program will work directly with providers to teach them best practices and help them implement the techniques in their clinics.

“Ultimately, our goal is to reduce the amount of late-stage colorectal cancer in Arkansas and the number of colorectal cancer deaths in Arkansas,” Dubriske said. “Colorectal cancer is a highly treatable disease, especially if caught early, and we know that screening saves lives. We’re looking forward to partnering with clinics to make a difference.”

UAMS will work with Federally Qualified Health Centers and Arkansas’ Quality Improvement Organization to implement the project.

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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