

UAMS JOURNAL

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES • FALL 2020



MEETING THE CHALLENGE

**UAMS Fights for Arkansas
During the COVID-19
Global Pandemic**

BEST
REGIONAL HOSPITALS

U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

ARKANSAS
RECOGNIZED IN 7 TYPES OF CARE
2020-21



MESSAGE

from the Chancellor

Dear Readers,

This year has brought challenges like none seen in generations.

With the COVID-19 global pandemic, business as usual at UAMS was upended in March as everything swiftly pivoted to helping limit the spread of the novel coronavirus that has infected more than 78,000 Arkansans and taken more than 1,200 Arkansas lives.

Students were sent home to continue their learning online, elective surgeries were put on hold to leave resources open for a possible influx of COVID-19 patients, and stringent procedures were put in place to screen employees who needed to come to campus to keep UAMS up and running.

But in the midst of the uncertainty, good work was continuing at UAMS that furthers patient care, researches new treatments and prepares the next generation of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, public health researchers and other health professionals.

Students have returned back to campus to begin the fall semester, elective surgeries resumed to provide much-needed income to keep the doors open, and researchers are bringing their talents to bear on many issues that face Arkansans — from disparities in health care in minority communities to health care access in rural areas to developing testing for the coronavirus.

You will read in this issue about UAMS' amazingly rapid response to care for patients with COVID-19, set up drive-thru testing and reach out across the state with mobile testing units for areas that lacked testing.

In addition, UAMS launched a 24/7 digital health service that seemed perfectly timed to offer patients health care through live video to avoid possible exposure to the virus. Our Northwest Regional Campus began offering classes in occupational therapy and expanded orthopaedic services.

UAMS opened a food pantry called Stocked & Reddie to provide fresh produce and balanced meals for students and employees in need. Research dollars increased a robust 43% in the 2020 fiscal year. We are beginning a nurse anesthesia program.

We hope you enjoy reading about the many things happening at UAMS as we continue working to improve the health, health care and well-being of Arkansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cam Patterson'.

Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA
UAMS Chancellor

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UAMS' Rapid COVID-19 Response Protects Patients, Students, Employees

By Elizabeth Caldwell

The response was swift, compassionate and creative.

When COVID-19 reached Arkansas with the first diagnosed patient March 11 — the same day it was declared

a pandemic by the World Health Organization — UAMS was ready.

From the very beginning, with the report of the first case in the U.S. on Jan. 20, UAMS took steps to



Members of the COVID-19 drive-thru team (from left): Robert Hopkins, M.D., Cynthia Frierson, RN; Deborah Hutts, RN; Alexa Martin, M.D.; and Edita Newton, M.D.



Curtis did a phenomenal job of staying ahead of the need, though sometimes it was close, with just a few days' worth of PPE on hand as supplies tightened across the U.S. and overseas.”

keep its patients, students and employees safe.

Every decision made by UAMS leadership centered on safety while gearing up to care for Arkansas patients.

First, UAMS Medical Center CEO Steppe Mette, M.D., activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which began meeting twice daily to get ahead of anticipated issues.

Curtis Broughton, assistant vice chancellor for supply chain, started acquiring more personal protective equipment (PPE) like gowns, masks, gloves and goggles that would be needed to protect health care workers while they evaluated, tested and cared for COVID-19 patients.

“Curtis did a phenomenal job of staying ahead of the need,” Mette said, “though sometimes it was close, with just a few days’ worth of PPE on hand as supplies tightened across the U.S. and overseas.”

UAMS opened a triage drive-thru site on campus to evaluate members of the public who displayed symptoms of respiratory illness, or were worried they had been exposed. By allowing patients to remain in their vehicles during evaluation, it cut down on the possibility of

exposing health care workers. As of mid-September, UAMS had performed 56,423 screenings.

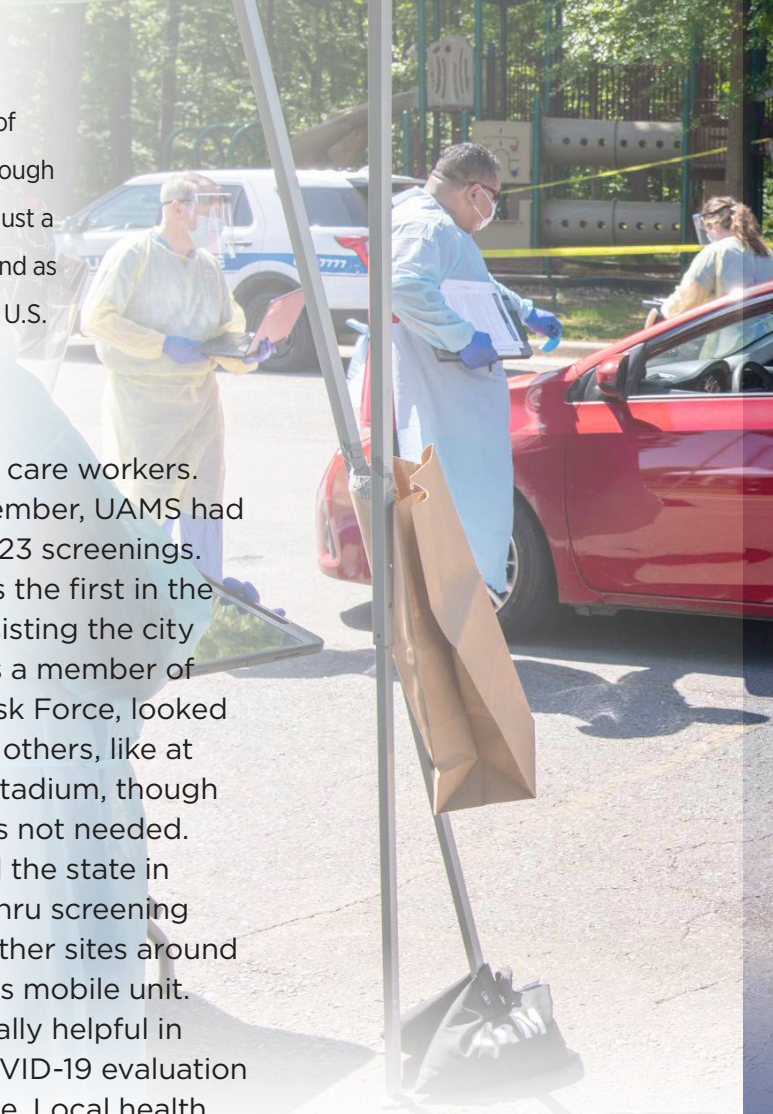
The triage was the first in the state. Mette, assisting the city of Little Rock as a member of its COVID-19 Task Force, looked into developing others, like at War Memorial Stadium, though eventually it was not needed.

UAMS also led the state in bringing drive-thru screening and testing to other sites around Arkansas with its mobile unit. This was especially helpful in areas where COVID-19 evaluation was not available. Local health care providers and city and state officials welcomed UAMS to their towns and helped staff the triage areas.

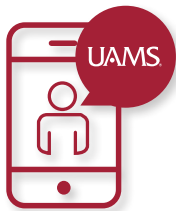
As of mid-September, the UAMS mobile unit held screenings 28 dates, screened 2,361 patients and performed 1,528 tests, with 86 showing positive.

As the shortage of test kits grew, UAMS researchers set to work developing their own COVID-19 test. This allowed UAMS to supplement testing done by the Arkansas Department of Health and private labs.

Free screening was also available with UAMS HealthNow



Mobile screening in Southwest Little Rock



healthnow

Free COVID-19 screenings were available with UAMS HealthNow through mobile devices or computer.

through a smart phone, tablet, laptop or computer for Arkansas adults who had symptoms or who had been exposed to the virus.

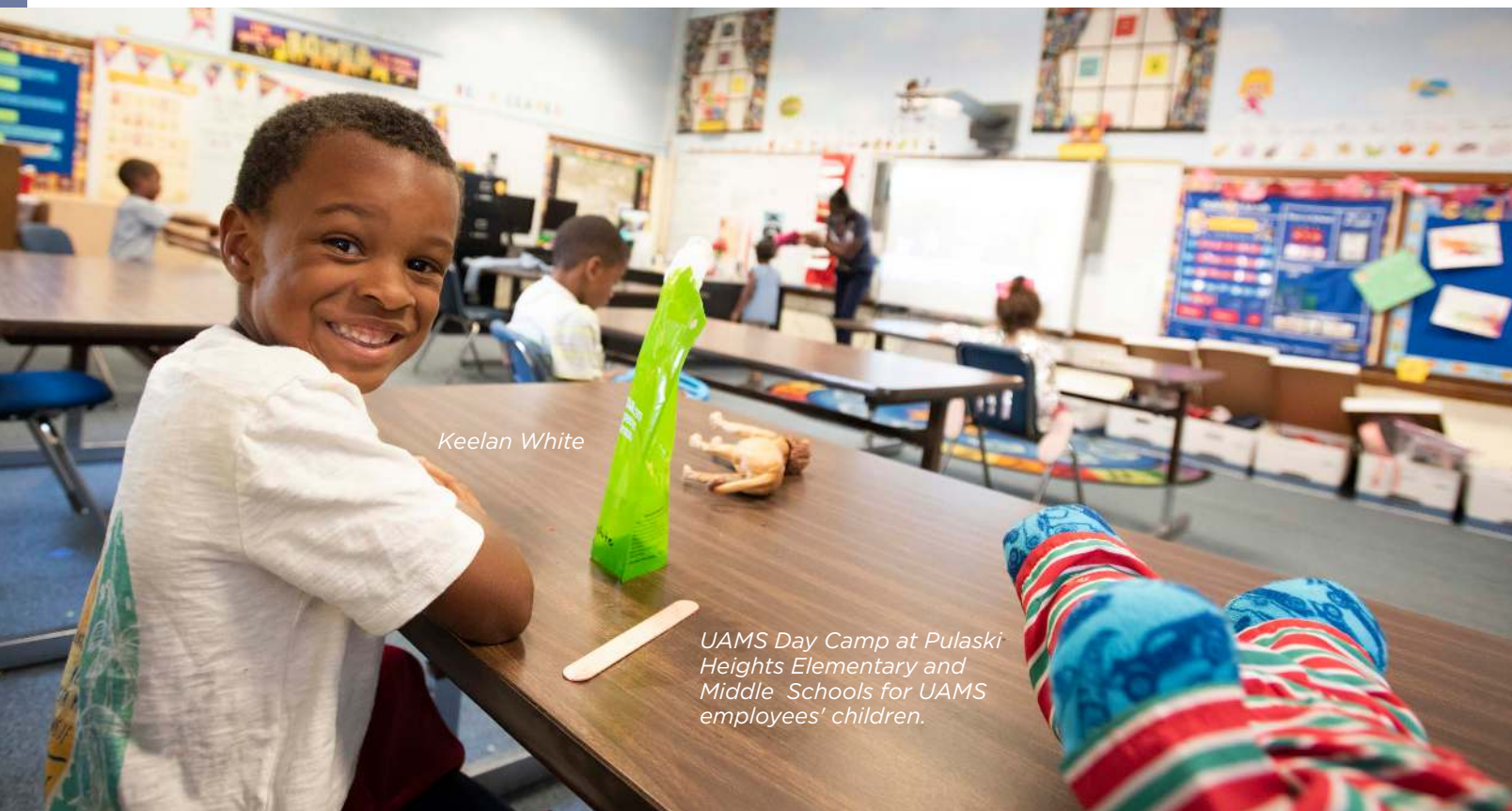
HealthNow had been launched in January to provide digital connection to health professionals 24 hours a day. But it quickly repositioned to screen for the virus. In late April it resumed taking virtual urgent care visits in addition to offering free COVID-19 screenings.

UAMS also led the way in central Arkansas to stop elective surgeries,

and all area health care providers agreed to do the same. This was to make sure there was capacity in the hospital and ICUs if needed for a surge in COVID patients. In June that initiative was relaxed once it was determined there was adequate capacity, and elective surgeries resumed.

When Gov. Asa Hutchinson closed the public schools in March to slow the spread of the virus, parents who worked at UAMS had to scramble to find someone to care for their children.

That's when UAMS and the Little Rock School District joined forces, opening a day camp April 20 at Pulaski Heights Elementary and Middle schools for UAMS employees' children aged 5 to 12. It was staffed by 142 volunteers, 97 of them UAMS employees whose regular jobs had been reduced due to changes brought about by the pandemic. The camp operated through July 31 and provided care free of charge to several hundred students.



Keelan White

UAMS Day Camp at Pulaski Heights Elementary and Middle Schools for UAMS employees' children.

But UAMS is not just a health care provider and research enterprise. More than 2,700 students in five colleges and a graduate school were preparing to become health care workers.

On March 12, to prevent possible exposure to the virus, UAMS sent home all students, some within weeks of graduating. Faculty worked overtime to develop a way for students to complete their courses online. In addition, most summer programs for high school and undergraduate students were able to be held online.

In an historic digital ceremony, UAMS graduated 914 health care professionals May 16, the date of their intended graduation, but held on live video. This included 165 doctors, 255 nurses, 112 pharmacists, 67 public health professionals, 257 in the allied health professions and 58 in the Graduate School.

In mid-May, in anticipation of school reopening for the fall, UAMS' Department of Orthopaedic Surgery developed guidelines to help high school and collegiate sports teams plan to safely resume activities during the pandemic.

The state Department of Health approved the guidelines, which encourage teams and student-athletes to be role models in safe infection control in their communities.

The UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health helped develop a contact tracing call center focused on the 52 public colleges and universities in Arkansas. It also provided models of projected numbers of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths in the state.

As the pandemic continues into the fall and the next year, UAMS is poised to continue to adapt to serve the people of Arkansas as needs arise. 🏠

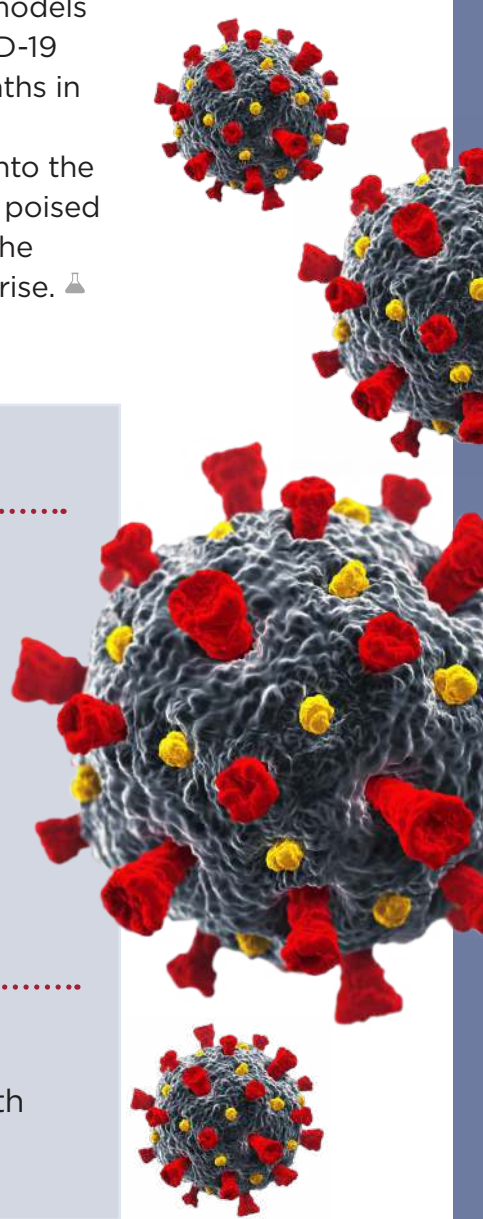
COVID-19 STATS as of mid-September

UAMS' drive-thru triage has performed **56,423** screenings

UAMS' day camp was staffed by **142** volunteers, **97** of them UAMS employees

UAMS' mobile unit held screenings on **28** dates, screened **2,361** patients and performed **1,528** tests, with **86** positive

UAMS **virtually** **graduated** **165** doctors, **255** nurses, **112** pharmacists, **67** public health professionals, **257** allied health professionsa and **58** in the Graduate School



UAMS Orthopaedics Brings Specialty Care to Northwest Arkansas

By David Wise



The new UAMS Health Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine clinic in Fayetteville

With a team of highly trained surgeons and physical therapists, UAMS this year expanded its orthopaedics and sports medicine presence to Northwest Arkansas, the fastest growing part of the state.

In January, the Shoulder Center of Arkansas in Fayetteville and its physical therapy partner, TRM (train-recover-move), became part of the statewide UAMS Health system as UAMS Health Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine.

“This premier team is an invaluable addition to our department, which is continuing to grow and reach patients where they live,” said C. Lowry Barnes, M.D., chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in the UAMS College of Medicine.

The team consists of orthopaedic surgeons Wesley Cox, M.D., Chad Songy, M.D., Navin Kilambi, M.D., Patrick “Shea” Brannan, M.D., Tyler CarlLee, M.D.; non-surgical sports medicine



UAMS is committed to growing specialty and subspecialty care in Northwest Arkansas.”

specialist Ramon Ylanan, M.D.,; and primary care sports medicine physician Larry Balle II, M.D, M.P.H.

“UAMS is committed to growing specialty and subspecialty care in Northwest Arkansas,” said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., vice chancellor for the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus, noting that the group recently opened a second clinic in Lowell.

The TRM team, which serves world-class athletes and Olympians, rounds out this unique and highly engaged group of physicians and therapists who work together to develop new approaches and better solutions that improve healing, speed rehabilitation and enhance patient outcomes.

TRM has locations in Fayetteville and Rogers. UAMS Health also has two Outpatient Therapy Clinics in Northwest Arkansas (Fayetteville and Springdale) that provide physical, occupational and speech therapy.

Cox, a shoulder, elbow and sports medicine orthopaedic surgeon who completed his residency at UAMS, founded the Shoulder Center of Arkansas in 2009 after returning to Northwest Arkansas from fellowship training in San Francisco. He was also head team physician for a number of sports programs at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Songy received his medical degree from Louisiana State University School of Medicine and completed his residency in orthopaedics at UAMS. After completing specialized training in complex shoulder and elbow reconstruction at the Mayo Clinic, he returned to Arkansas to join the Shoulder Center of Arkansas.

Ylanan has more than 11 years’ experience in nonsurgical orthopaedic sports medicine. Since 2015, he has directed the Primary Care Sports Medicine Fellowship at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville, where he trained two Southeastern Conference team physicians.

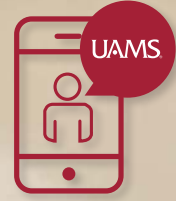
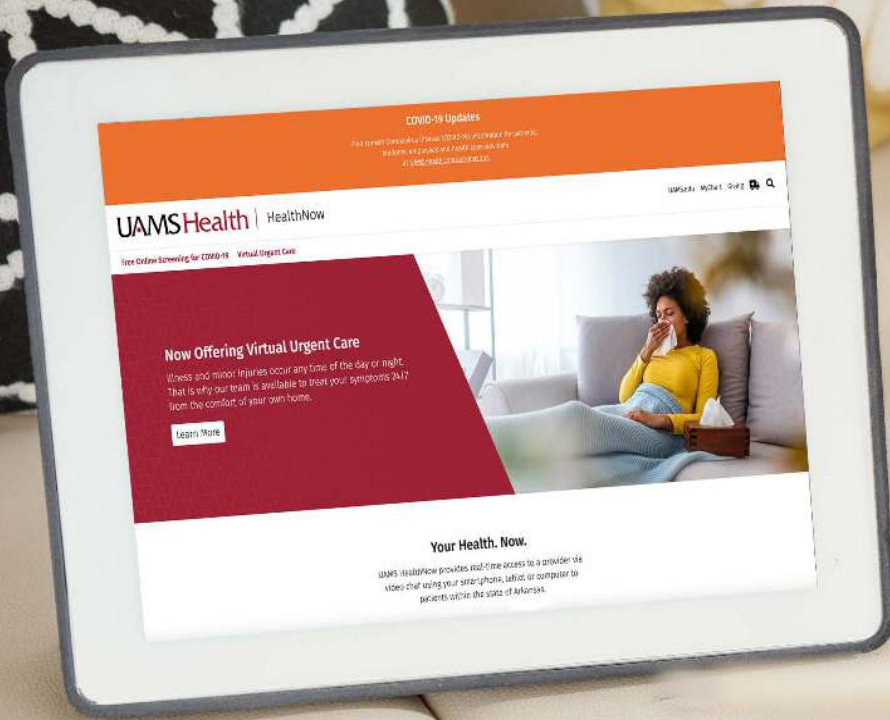
In addition to being responsible for overseeing the medical care of numerous University of Arkansas men’s and women’s athletic teams, Ylanan served as the co-head team physician for the University of South Carolina Gamecocks.

Kilambi has 20 years of experience in sports medicine and orthopaedics, with collegiate and professional experience. He received his medical degree from UAMS, completed his residency at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, and completed his fellowship in sports medicine and arthroscopy at the Cincinnati Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center.

Brannan has more than 20 years of experience in orthopaedic surgery. He received his medical degree from UAMS, completed his residency at Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Airforce Base in Texas, and a hand and upper extremity fellowship at OrthoCarolina.

Balle, who completed his residency in family and community medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, and a fellowship in primary care sports medicine at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus, spent a number of years as the primary care sports medicine team physician and chief medical officer for the University of Arkansas Razorbacks. He has also provided sports medicine care for Shiloh Christian, Springdale, and Har-Ber and Fayetteville high schools, as well as the Eurekan Sports Festival, Joe Martin Stage Race, Hogeye Marathon, Iron Pig Festival Duathlon, professional bull riding and other local events.

CarlLee, a 2014 graduate of UAMS, has nine years of experience caring for athletes from high school to the NFL. His experience in providing team coverage includes both the University of Iowa and the Carolina Panthers football team. He recently completed a sports medicine and shoulder elbow fellowship with OrthoCarolina. 🏆



*health***now**

New UAMS HealthNow Offers Convenient Health Care 24/7

By Ben Boulden

It's 2 a.m. and your toddler is crying and pulling at her ear. You suspect an ear ache. No need to get dressed and make a middle-of-the-night trip to the ER.

Instead, turn on your computer, tablet or phone and connect in real time to a UAMS health care provider through the new UAMS

HealthNow internet service that went live in January.

Through mobile devices or computers anyone can access 24-hour, digital health care in real time. They can connect via live video and see UAMS expert health care providers who offer a wide range of personalized care online. The cost

is competitive with other urgent care services and much less costly than an ER visit.

Feedback has been positive for the service, provided through the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation.

“When we’ve called patients back to check on them, they have said things like ‘It was the best thing,’” said Stacy Petty, APRN, UAMS HealthNow director. “Or ‘It was so easy and saved me from having to get dressed and or go out to a doctor.’”

UAMS has priced its convenient care to be competitive with other providers of online or in-person urgent care. UAMS HealthNow will not bill insurance, but some insurers will reimburse patients who file directly with them.

“The service is doing well. We really expect it to expand to other health care systems,” said Joseph Sanford, M.D., interim director of the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. “We’re meeting with insurance companies about how we can become a part of their product line. We’re working with employers around the state of Arkansas to start providing this service to companies, too.”

Unlike some other health care providers who provide similar services through out-of-state, third party contractors, UAMS is making its providers available directly. That means better continuity of care for patients who later need to

be treated or to have lab work done on the main campus or at a UAMS clinic.

Many potential patients have already visited the HealthNow website to register and enter all their credit or debit card information. That way they don’t have to do that later when they or a loved one is sick and they want to use the service, Petty said.

UAMS HealthNow is providing several conveniences to patients, she said. First is easier access to a provider. A primary care provider may already have a full schedule the day a patient feels sick and wants to see them. Second, a patient doesn’t have to go to a waiting room and risk getting sicker by contracting an illness from another patient. Third, a patient who lives in rural Arkansas doesn’t have to find child care or transportation to travel long distance to see a provider. It’s also convenient to parents who come home after hours and find their child is sick.

“We had some feedback from a patient who was traveling home from a work trip,” Petty said. “He was sick and he pulled over to the side of the interstate to call us. He was able to be seen by us on his cell phone. He picked up his prescription on the way home then went right to bed. He was thrilled and said it was above and beyond his expectations.”

To access UAMS HealthNow, visit uamshealth.com/healthnow. 📍



The service is doing well. We really expect it to expand to other health care systems.”

Joseph Sanford, M.D.



Birrer Called to Lead UAMS CANCER INSTITUTE to NCI Designation

By Susan Van Dusen



Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D.



My job is to get us to designation. That includes strategically hiring researchers and encouraging those we have now to work together toward specific research goals.”

As a young physician-scientist, Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., had a decision to make. While his doctorate in immunology could lead to a promising career, there might be another area he found even more inviting.

This was in the late 80s, when scientists were becoming increasingly interested in looking at the structure and function of genes at the molecular level.

“The field of molecular genetics was exploding and held a lot of promise. I switched my interest to molecular biology and started working in lung cancer at the National Cancer Institute with Dr. John Minna, who is a well-respected researcher in the field,” Birrer said.

It was during this time that Birrer volunteered to sit on a Gynecologic Cancer Tumor Board, primarily because no one else wanted to do it, he said.

“I was a junior faculty member, and the jobs no one wants always flowed downstream,” he said.

As it turned out, his willingness to serve may actually have been an act of fate, as he quickly became intrigued with the biology of gynecological tumors.

“From there, my lab really began to focus on trying to understand the molecular underpinnings of these tumors and translating that information into better therapies for patients,” he said.

This effort grew first at his lab at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and then later at Massachusetts General Hospital at Harvard Medical School.

In December 2019, Birrer – now an internationally recognized medical oncologist -- brought his research lab and clinical practice to UAMS when he joined the university as vice chancellor and director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.

As former director of the O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birrer knows firsthand what it takes to lead a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated center, a goal the UAMS Cancer Institute strives to reach within the next three to five years.

“My job is to get us to designation. That includes strategically hiring researchers and encouraging those we have now to work together toward specific research goals. Team science is now recognized as the way research should be done, and it’s what the NCI expects to see at a designated center,” said Birrer, who also serves as director the UAMS Cancer Service Line.

NCI Designation brings with it many benefits, including the ability for patients to participate in the latest clinical trials and for researchers to apply for significant federal funding.

With only 71 designated centers across the country, achieving designation would place the UAMS Cancer Institute in the top 2% of cancer centers nationwide.

“This is of vital important for all Arkansans. With the support of Gov. Hutchinson, UAMS Chancellor Patterson and the Arkansas Legislature, we are well on our way to meeting the rigorous standards set by the NCI and becoming the first designated cancer center in Arkansas,” Birrer said.

In early 2019, the UAMS Cancer Institute received unanimous support in both the Arkansas Senate and House for its quest to achieve designation by receiving an annual state allocation of at least \$10 million in support of the effort.

Birrer also plans to expand the Cancer Institute’s clinical services, including in his area of expertise — women’s health.

Ever since that first spark of interest as a young physician-scientist, Birrer's dedication to gynecologic cancer research and treatment has never wavered. He enthusiastically tells of recent significant advances in ovarian cancer research.

"When I started training, the life expectancy for a woman diagnosed with ovarian cancer was 11 months. Now, many patients are living more than five years, and we are probably curing some of them. That is thanks to a new class of drugs known as PARP inhibitors," he said.

PARP is an enzyme in cells that helps repair damaged DNA. In cancer treatment, blocking PARP may help prevent

cancer cells from repairing their damaged DNA and cause them to die instead.

Due to its lack of overt symptoms, ovarian cancer is often diagnosed at a late stage, leading to fewer treatment options and a shortened life expectancy. About 140 Arkansas women are expected to die from ovarian cancer in 2020, but with new therapies Birrer is hopeful that number will fall.

"My guess is that the field will continue changing rapidly over the next three to five years, and we'd like to contribute to that," he said. 🧪

'Be a Part of the Cure' Raises \$418,000 for Cancer Institute with First-Ever Televised Fundraiser

By Susan Van Dusen

Arkansans stepped up to support the fight against cancer when the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute sponsored its first-ever televised fundraising event Sept. 2.

Be a Part of the Cure aired throughout the day on KATV, Channel 7 and raised \$418,000 for the Cancer Institute's research and treatment programs. Donations can still be made by texting WPRCI to 41444.

"We are thrilled with the generosity of our fellow Arkansans. The fight against cancer never stops, and these funds will play an important role in allowing our researchers to make vital discoveries right here in Arkansas," said Natalie Rockefeller, co-chair of the event along with husband Win Rockefeller Jr.

The event was sponsored by Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort and hosted by KATV personality Renee Shapiro.

Arvest, Middleton Heat and Air, Rock City Harley Davidson and Mitchell Williams Law Firm each sponsored \$5,000 matching gifts.

Members of the Cancer Institute Board of Advisors accepted donations by phone, while other donors contributed via text.

"This event would not have been possible without the outstanding support of our donors and Cancer Institute Board of Advisors. Cancer touches far too many families. It is our hope that the money we raise will bring hope to people living with cancer now and those diagnosed in the future," Win Rockefeller said.



The event kicked off with statements from Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, and Cancer Institute Director Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D.

"The UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute is a leader in innovative research and therapies that benefit all Arkansans. I am proud of their work and support their efforts to find new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer," Hutchinson said.

Patterson praised the Cancer Institute's dedication to providing care for citizens from throughout the state.

"Even during a pandemic, cancer does not stop. That's why we must fight even harder to ensure all Arkansans have access to highest quality care and the latest treatment options," Patterson said.

Funds raised by the event will be used to support the work of Cancer Institute researchers and allow for patients to participate in new clinical trials.

"By expanding the number of clinical trials we offer, our patients will have access to the most advanced treatment options. We are committed to providing these therapies for all Arkansans, because this is what our patients both want and need," said Birrer, who also serves as vice chancellor and director the UAMS Cancer Service Line.

The televised event featured doctors and cancer survivors sharing stories about the Cancer Institute's services. 🧪

UAMS Health

UAMS Launches Statewide Health System

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) recently organized all of its clinical enterprises in Little Rock and around the state under the UAMS Health umbrella.

“UAMS is more than a hospital, it is more than a university and it is more than cutting-edge research,” said Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. “We are a health system — one that serves all of the state — and this reorganization demonstrates our commitment to providing quality health care to all Arkansans.”

UAMS Health includes the UAMS Medical Center, Neighborhood Clinics, orthopaedic clinics, women’s clinics, the Family Medical Centers at UAMS regional sites, digital health clinics and the affiliated clinics that UAMS operates in conjunction with other health care providers.

As a state-supported health sciences university offering unique specialty care and programs, UAMS serves residents in every county of Arkansas. What started with one campus in Little Rock in 1879 has evolved into a multi-campus clinical delivery system that includes eight regional campuses strategically placed across the state with plans to add more, Patterson said.

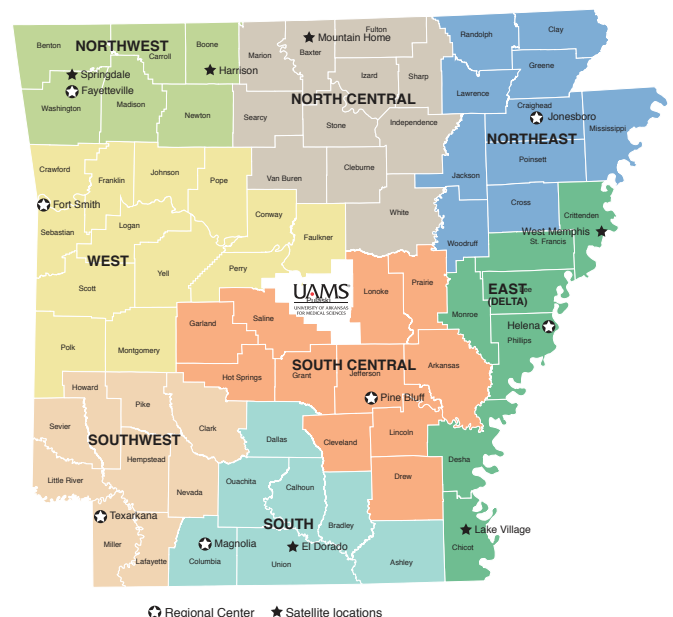
“We are increasing our focus on digital health, which is an essential component of our health system,” he said. “Programs pioneered by our Institute for Digital Health & Innovation are erasing miles, allowing for physician-to-physician consults and for patients to communicate with physicians without leaving home.

“UAMS is continuing to push the envelope in providing health care throughout the state, both through its current operations and our future endeavors,” Patterson said.


UAMS is the parent institution of all components of UAMS including UAMS Health. UAMS is the health sciences university of the University of Arkansas System. 🏥



We are a health system — one that serves all of the state — and this reorganization demonstrates our commitment to providing quality health care to all Arkansans.”



🏥 Regional Center ★ Satellite locations



UAMS RESEARCHERS See 43% funding Increase in FY2020

By David Robinson

Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D.

UAMS and its affiliate research institutions saw research funding grow by 43% this past year, with \$158.1 million in grants by the end of the fiscal year, June 30.

The bulk of the funding is from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other federal sources, said Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D., vice chancellor for Research and Innovation.

“This is truly encouraging news for our research enterprise,” Ho said. “These funds help us answer critical scientific questions, test new ideas for tackling Arkansas’ major health issues, and elevate the stature of UAMS as a premier academic health center in the nation.”

UAMS researchers work on the UAMS main campus, its regional campuses, and at its affiliates Arkansas Children’s Research Institute (ACRI) and the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS).

UAMS-based researchers acquired \$125.5 million in grants, an increase of 55 percent.

A total 358 projects received funding, with a number of big grants driving the increase. Topping the list is a five-year, \$24.2 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) to the UAMS Translational Research Institute from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences at the NIH.

Helping spur the funding growth, Ho said, are new approaches and strategies at UAMS that have prioritized collaborative efforts, increased efficiencies in research administration, and focused investments more directly in areas related to improving health outcomes in Arkansas.

In many ways, UAMS is fundamentally changing the way it conducts research under the direction of Ho; Laura James, M.D., director of the Translational Research Institute and associate vice chancellor for clinical and translational research; and Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., vice chancellor and director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.

In recent months, many UAMS researchers have shifted their focus to COVID-19.

“We are ramping up efforts that address extremely difficult medical and bio-behavioral issues that rank Arkansas among the least healthy states,” Ho said.

Robust partnerships and joint grant submissions between UAMS, its growing Northwest Regional Campus, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock are playing larger roles, she said.

James said UAMS collaborations with ACRI and CAVHS are also a top priority for the institute.

At CAVHS, UAMS researchers in fiscal 2020 successfully competed for nearly \$9 million in grants from the Veterans Affairs Research and Development program and nonprofit Biomedical Research Foundation. The funding, which represents an increase of more than 15% compared to 2019, has supported 23 research projects.

The VA research program is focused on veterans’ needs. CAVHS’ basic and translational research include aging and cognitive decline, suicide prevention, bone metabolism, atherosclerosis, and more recently, COVID-19.

At ACRI, UAMS researchers in fiscal 2020 acquired \$23.8 million, supporting 140 projects, compared to \$23.7 million last year. ACRI researchers, with expertise in basic science and clinical and community-based research, are addressing a broad spectrum of children’s health concerns including childhood nutrition, childhood obesity, food allergy, diabetes-related complications, and numerous childhood diseases including asthma and cancer.

As a CTSA-funded institution, UAMS is among a select group of about 60 research centers.

Ho foresees expanding on UAMS’ existing strengths in cancer, bone health, infectious diseases and addiction reduction research with new emphasis on digital health, artificial intelligence, machine learning and regenerative medicine. She believes UAMS will continue to demonstrate innovations in research. 🏠



We want Arkansas to have all of the new treatment protocols available to NCI-designated cancer centers."



Leanne Lefler, Ph.D., APRN and Steve Bruno

Study Uses Digital Equipment to Monitor Heart Patients at Home

By David Robinson

Steve Bruno worries every day about having another heart attack or stroke.

The 62-year-old Sherwood resident is doing what he can to continue beating the odds since a simultaneous heart attack and stroke brought him to UAMS five years ago.

Bruno is one of about 438,000 heart failure survivors in Arkansas. Nearly a quarter will die

in one year and nearly half in five years after their first hospitalization. Most struggle daily.

“There’s really nothing worse,” said UAMS’ Leanne Lefler, Ph.D., APRN, an associate professor in the UAMS College of Nursing. She has cared for heart failure patients for 17 years. “They live with fear, frustration and distress every day because of recurrent symptoms.”



They live with fear, frustration and distress every day because of recurrent symptoms.”

Lefler has been working to improve their lives her whole career. Now, as a researcher, she is on the cusp of doing it in a big way.

She successfully tested daily digital home-health monitoring by UAMS in a small study that included Bruno as a participant. That work led to a three-year, \$4 million Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) award in December 2019. It is the largest research grant ever awarded to the UAMS College of Nursing.

The PCORI study focuses on the heart failure patients’ key health measures – weight, blood pressure and blood oxygen level. The patients take measurements every day and submit them electronically to the UAMS Call Center, where registered nurses are monitoring them. If a patient forgets or if their numbers show signs of trouble, they can expect a phone call.

The study will involve 400 patients hospitalized at UAMS with heart failure. Half will be connected to UAMS by Wi-Fi. The other half will take the same measurements at home but without the remote monitoring connection with UAMS. Low-income participants will be provided limited Wi-Fi, and all patients will receive monitoring equipment.

Survivors of heart failure leave the hospital with special instructions and an average of 11 prescription medications per day, requiring complex regimens. They are often older and lack the ability to do it all. Rural and poorer patients


with heart failure have the worst outcomes.

Bruno, now part of a patient advisory board for the PCORI study, sees exciting potential for the digital intervention.

“Having that connection with UAMS will be a great help, especially in rural areas,” Bruno said. “When I was in Dr. Lefler’s pilot study, it really helped me stay on top of my numbers and get into the routine of managing my own care.”

The digital intervention was designed with assistance by the patient advisory board, and collaborators such as the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation, the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement, the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care and the Arkansas affiliate of the American Heart Association.

Lefler believes the study will show that digital health can improve patient self-care, reduce hospital readmissions, lower mortality and increase quality of life. If it can do all that, it will significantly reduce costs. That, in turn, could mean a continuation of no-cost Wi-Fi and monitoring equipment for Medicare and Medicaid patients.

“UAMS believes in equity, decreasing health disparities, and outreach to rural areas,” Lefler said. “This study is helping to develop and test a model of care that is sustainable beyond the grant funding and applicable to hospital systems throughout the U.S.” 

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States





New Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **CHAMPIONS EXCELLENCE**

By Spencer Watson

It seems only fitting that increasing diversity and inclusion would be a group project.

That's why Brian Gittens, Ed.D., who joined UAMS in 2019 as vice chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, made it a priority to recruit leaders from across the institution to shape strategy, define goals and measure the success of his division.

“Our guiding principle in this division is inclusive excellence, which means that diversity is everyone’s responsibility,” said Gittens. “We can help educate a culturally proficient workforce within a culture that promotes diversity, equity and inclusion, but ultimately it’s on everyone at UAMS to embrace that vision every day as they go about their work.”

To define the specific objectives and measures that will help bring that vision to life, objectives that fit into the larger

UAMS Vision 2029 plan, Gittens formed a strategy team consisting of representatives from academic, clinical and administrative roles. He charged them with identifying where and how



Our division is built around the idea of providing service and support to the rest of the institution. Obviously, you can't do that if you live in silos and never seek input from elsewhere on or off campus."

policies relevant to their area could help promote diversity.

For example, leaders from both the Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and Regional Campuses might have input on goals to diversify technological outreach to underrepresented communities in rural Arkansas.

"Our division is built around the idea of providing service and support to the rest of the institution. Obviously, you can't do that if you live in silos and never seek input from elsewhere on or off campus," said Gittens.

In addition to forming the strategy team, the division created seven subcommittees, each charged with advising division leadership on crafting and implementing policy regarding various traditionally underrepresented minority groups: recruitment and retention of minority faculty, staff and students, veterans, women, LGBTQ+ individuals and those with disabilities. Each subcommittee is co-chaired by faculty and comprised of volunteers from all over the institution.

"Our intent is to shape policy with a view that is informed by a grassroots perspective," said Gittens. "We sought those who are passionate about representation and are willing to advocate for these identified groups by being a voice for them as we work to become a national leader in diversity, equity and inclusion."

The division has added a new full-time office administrator and two faculty members who serve in part-time positions — Gloria Richard-Davis, M.D., MBA, as the executive director for diversity, equity and inclusion, and Rosemary Nabaweesi, Dr.P.H., as the senior director of research and evaluation.

The reorganized division has already launched a new initiative intended to support the entire institution. The Office of Intercultural Education has been created to offer learning experiences that help increase awareness of the importance of diversity, equity and

inclusion, specifically through its Academy of Inclusive Excellence. The academy will offer training exercises for employees throughout UAMS to better understand and practice inclusive excellence.

More information and registration for academy learning activities can be found on the division's new website — ddei.Uams.Edu.

"We're very excited about the work we're doing," said Gittens. "From diversifying research and measuring patient experience to expanding the educational pipeline and growing community contact through events, we have already identified a number of new opportunities in the ongoing effort to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive atmosphere second to none here at UAMS."

When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Arkansas with its first case in March, many educational activities were interrupted. As part of the UAMS response to COVID-19, the division:

- Launched new, multilingual communications to impart vital information, and staff volunteered across the institution to support clinical operations.
- Moved summer outreach programming online, increasing safety for program participants by encouraging social distancing and extending its reach beyond the footprint of Arkansas.
- Held online "Pulse Check" meetings to gather incoming underrepresented minority students for a meeting with current students, faculty and staff before they made a final decision to attend UAMS.
- Launched a weekly radio program in partnership with station KABF to share facts and updates about COVID for traditionally underserved communities.
- Worked with community partners to produce a multilingual video analyzing the impact of COVID-19 and its disparate impact on minority communities. 🏠



Shauntay Iverson, R.N.

Nurse Anesthesia Welcomes Its First Students

By Spencer Watson

Beginning this month, the UAMS College of Nursing will welcome its first students in the nurse anesthesia specialty, allowing UAMS to meet a specific health care and educational need for the state and surrounding area.

Nurse anesthetists work in an operating room, preparing patients, administering and monitoring the effects of anesthesia, and caring for patients as they initially recover.

“I tell people if you’ve ever had any kind of anesthesia, you’ve probably met a CRNA. You just don’t remember it because you were under the effect of anesthesia during this time,” said Michelle Gonzalez, Ph.D., CRNA, who joined UAMS in January 2019 to direct the new program.

This advanced practice nursing specialty takes three years and culminates in a doctorate of nursing practice (D.N.P.) and eligibility to



Clinical sites look at this program as a potential pipeline for employment. There are definitely positions that are open and a lot of growth in this area of health care.”

become a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA).

In March, Gonzalez and assistant director, Mark Dunavan, D.N.P., CRNA, began calling prospective students to offer a spot among the program’s first class of students.

“I wish I could record those phone calls,” Gonzalez said. “The excitement and the joy was truly palpable.”

More than 100 applicants were vying for only 16 spots. It is the only such program based in Arkansas.

While the first year of coursework focuses on scientific principles, theory, research methodology and leadership coursework, the bulk of the program is devoted to educating students on the principles and practice of nurse anesthesia.

The widespread application of anesthesia creates a high demand for the practice, particularly in rural settings where health care facilities may be under tight budgets. In those situations, a nurse anesthetist can be a practical solution.

“Clinical sites look at this program as a potential pipeline for employment. There are definitely positions that are open and a lot of growth in this area of health care,” said Dunavan.

“To practice at their full scope of education, training, and licensing, CRNAs can fill a void, as there’s a definite need to provide anesthesia care, but there’s not always an anesthesiologist available,” said Gonzalez. “When geography is an issue or money is tight, CRNAs


are a cost-effective model for health care.”

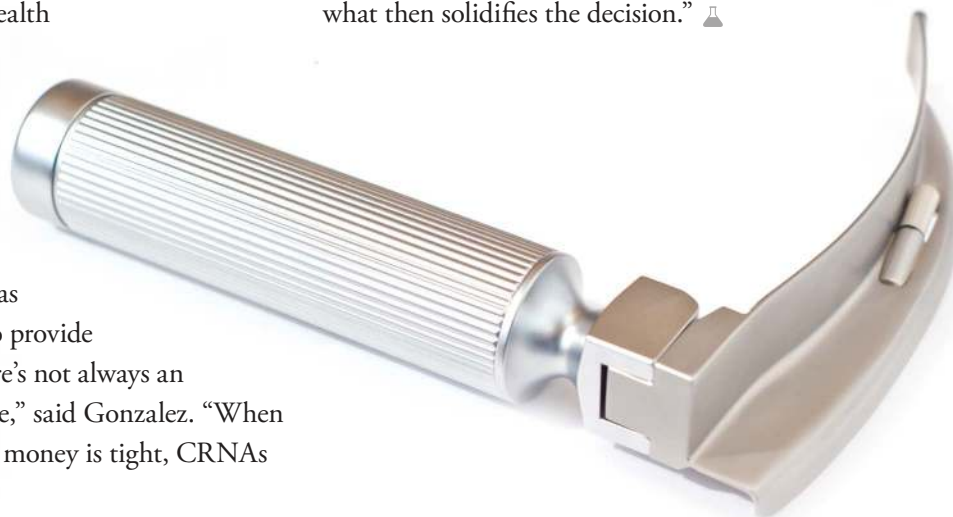
The program is designed to take bachelor’s level nurses to a doctoral level.

“We tell prospective students that we expect this to be a full-time job. It will require on average 60-64 hours per week dedicated to either studying material or clinical practice,” said Dunavan. “We try to be very transparent about what the expectations are, that there’s no room for a side job, and family routines may be disrupted. This becomes a student’s life for the next three years, if they choose to accept it.”

Applicants are required to have extensive experience in critical care, and that’s where many become aware of nurse anesthesia practice.

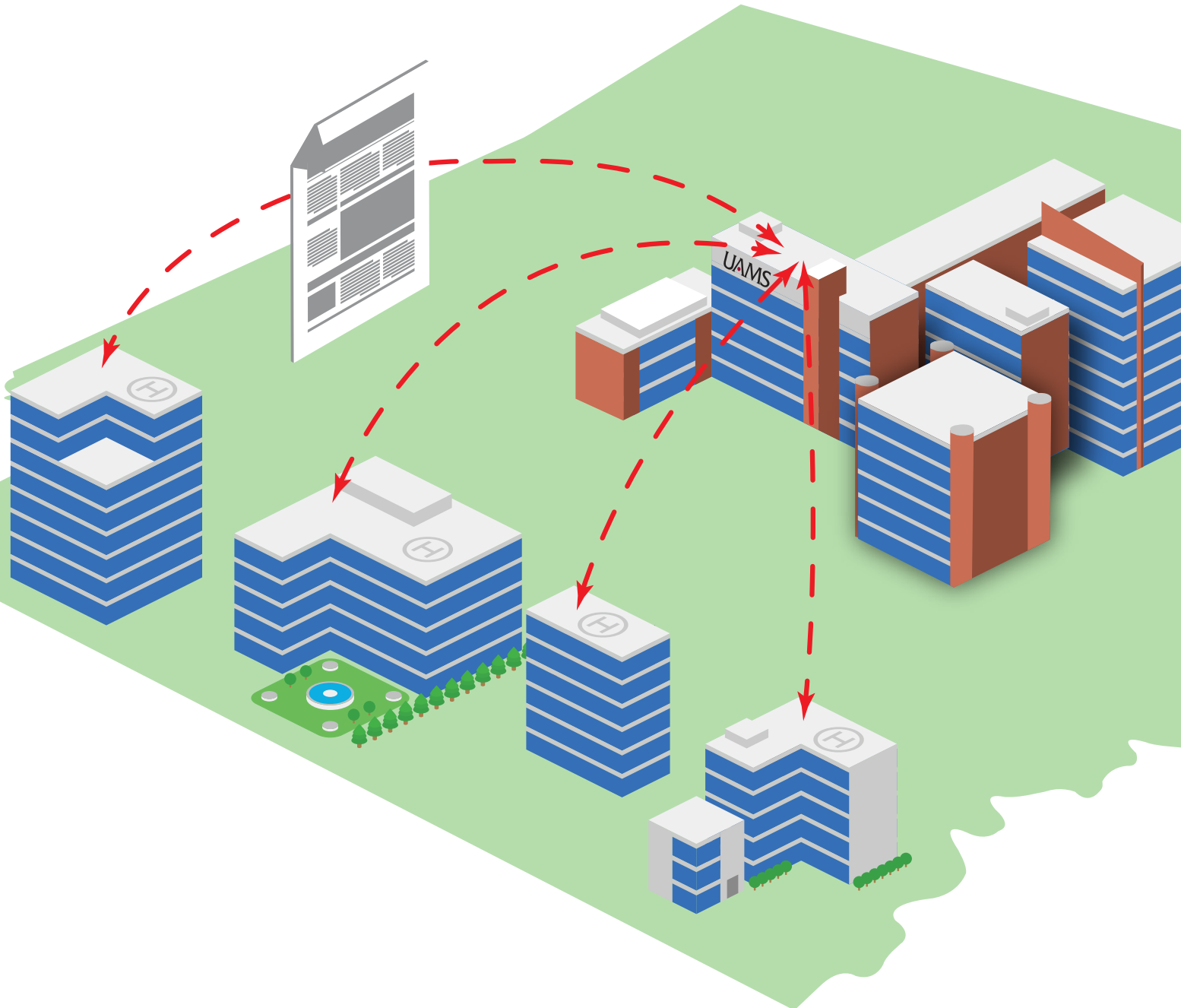
“Let’s say you’re a nurse working in an ICU. You may start to have interactions with CRNAs when they bring a patient from the operating room to the ICU. You see a CRNA in action and your curiosity gets piqued,” said Gonzalez, who noted her own career path was similar.

“We always recommend potential candidates to shadow a CRNA for a day or more so they can see from start to finish what’s involved in taking care of a patient as a CRNA, and that’s usually what then solidifies the decision.” 



Rural Health Partnership, UAMS Upgrade Rural Hospital Networks

By Ben Boulden



Saving patients mileage, travel time and costs while receiving care closer to home are the hoped-for results of a new initiative to help rural south Arkansas hospitals share patient records electronically.

Sharing records is necessary when patients are transferred from local hospitals to UAMS, or specialists in one location are needed to consult with health care providers in another location.



You wouldn't believe how many 80-year-old people from rural parts of the state are driving hours to get to UAMS."

Being able to share electronically is especially important in a rural state, which led to the creation of the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership.

"You wouldn't believe how many 80-year-old people from rural parts of the state are driving hours to get to UAMS," said Mellie Bridewell, Arkansas Rural Health Partnership CEO and a UAMS employee in the Office of Strategic Management.

"Patients are going to realize they can use their local hospitals and come home earlier. They're not going to have to take the time or take off work to care for loved ones or themselves by staying in Little Rock as long or traveling back and forth. That's a big deal."

The partnership, a nonprofit organization made up of 14 hospitals and 108 hospital-owned or affiliated clinics in the southern region of the state, is upgrading the electronic medical records systems so each hospital or clinic is able to share files and see patient data.

That will help minimize patient transfers, improve the transfers when they are necessary, and return patients to their local hospitals during recovery even if they required surgery or treatment elsewhere.

UAMS supports and works closely with the partnership on professional health education and public health issues.

Bridewell said with the new data-sharing capability, a consulting physician at UAMS could look at all of a patient's information and lab results, avoiding travel to Little Rock for redundant testing and in-person visits. Other providers also can send clinical information instantly through the Arkansas' health records

exchange, so providers have it before the patients arrive after transfer.

In January, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield awarded \$817,000 to the partnership. The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) in February awarded the partnership \$89,000.

The grants will pay for upgrading equipment and annual dues required by the ADH's records exchange. There is no public funding mechanism to assist rural hospitals and clinics with the annual costs.

None of the partnership members have been full participants in ADH's health records exchange because of the high costs of full membership. The grant will help them participate at the highest level.

"Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield's support and the work of the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership through the records exchange will strengthen the coordination of medical care for patients in south Arkansas," said Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D., senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, provost and chief strategy officer.

"UAMS is glad to be working with the Rural Health Partnership, which serves as an important connector of stakeholders in all elements of the health care system focused on improving care for patients," Gardner said.

Bridewell said member hospitals must share and have access to patient data as well as have the support of a system that can assist them with compiling and collecting the data for treating their patients.

"Without this assistance, our small rural hospitals will not be able to financially survive the changes in health care and insurance compensation ahead," she said. 🏠

Ronald McDonald Family Room Keeps Families of Premies Together

By Katrina Dupins



NICU Medical Director, Sara Peebles, M.D., plays with the Baker children.



This space is a great opportunity for families just to come and relax. They can be away from the bedside but still be in the hospital and close to their child.”



RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES

Since February 2020, families don’t have to be separated from their babies in the UAMS neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

The new Ronald McDonald Family Room in UAMS Medical Center features four overnight rooms for parents and siblings

of babies in the NICU. The 2,000-square-foot space was built by and is staffed and operated by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas.

“We love seeing this project come to fruition,” said Sara Peeples, M.D., medical director for the UAMS NICU. “This space is a great opportunity for families just to come and relax. They can be away from the bedside but still be in the hospital and close to their child.”

Emily Baker and Michael Baker of Newport were the first to stay in the new space with their daughter, Isabella, 3, and son, Bradley, then nearly 2. Their third child, Joshua, was delivered in January when Emily Baker was 28 weeks pregnant. He stayed in the NICU 65 days until he was healthy enough to go home.

“When my daughter was born, it was easier. My husband and I were able to stay with her,” Emily Baker said. “But with my son, that wasn’t possible because we had a little girl at home and children couldn’t stay in the NICU overnight.”

This time, the Baker Family didn’t have to choose between staying close to their preemie and spending time with their other children.

A four-month construction process by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas

converted the space, which includes a day-use area open to all NICU families and an open kitchen stocked with frozen meals, snacks and a coffee/ beverage station. There is a play area and laundry facilities.

UAMS serves families from across Arkansas and babies often stay in the NICU for weeks or months. With 58 patient rooms and 64 beds in the NICU, the family room is expected to serve over 1,000 families each year.

“This means the world to a parent like me who is so far away from home,” Baker said.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas is a locally funded and operated non-profit dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and their families by creating and supporting programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children. There are 138 other Ronald McDonald Family Rooms in the United States, and 250 worldwide.

“I’m really excited about the space but also about the partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities and the opportunities for providing meals, educational opportunities and other resources for our families,” Peeples said.

“That goes beyond this space that they’ve created for us. We’re looking forward to what’s going to happen in the future. This is just the beginning.”

Major donors include Windgate Charitable Foundation, Susie and Charles Morgan, RMHC Global, The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, Clark Family Foundation Inc., Jeanne Andrews, the Sunderland Foundation, RMHCA Board of Directors, local McDonald’s owners, the Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, Windstream, The Trinity Foundation, Nabholz Charitable Foundation, Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, and Tarkett. 🏠



Kaylie Efird (left) and Adeline Posey

Occupational Therapy Program Begins in Northwest Arkansas

By David Wise

The sounds of hammers, drills and saws on the first floor of the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus have given way to the chatter of voices as the first group of students in January began the new Doctor of Occupational Therapy program.

Workers finished construction in December on a 7,000-square-foot space that serves as a hands-on learning lab for 27 students in a three-year collaborative program between UAMS and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. This is the first joint clinical program between the two universities.

The students split their time between the two campuses, which are both in Fayetteville. A two-story house on the UA campus is a learning and teaching space for instructors and students.

The upper level looks like a typical house. It has two bedrooms – a child’s room with a crib, baby changing table and bunkbeds, and an adult bedroom. A small kitchen features a sink, refrigerator, stove and small appliances. There is also a laundry area, an office and an open dining room and living room.

The house was designed to help students understand the occupational challenges people



Students and faculty use active learning strategies to design innovative interventions for people of all ages who may have physical, cognitive, mental or neurological issues.”

face when returning to their homes after illness or injury. Sherry Muir, Ph.D., department chair and program director, said having an authentic environment for students is a key ingredient for their professional growth.

“Students and faculty use active learning strategies to design innovative interventions for people of all ages who may have physical, cognitive, mental or neurological issues,” Muir said

The downstairs is an administrative area, with a meeting room and offices for faculty members. Faculty are all occupational therapists with additional advanced degrees, including Muir; Kandy Salter, O.T.D., academic fieldwork coordinator & capstone coordinator; Jeanne Eichler, Ed.D., assistant professor; and Mark Koch, O.T.D., and Anna Harris, O.T.D., both assistant teaching professors.

On the UAMS campus, the learning lab space includes two apartments — one with a handicapped-accessible bathroom with a shower that simulates a hospital setting and a hospice room. These help students learn to work with patients in a nursing home or medical facility.

There’s also a Lifespan Center classroom with swings, balance boards and other equipment to address sensory needs and balance across a person’s lifespan. An assistive technology lab includes a 3-D printer for creating prototypes of adaptive equipment and devices to increase independence. A fabrication lab enables students to make splints and casts.

There is a garage area where students learn how to help patients navigate getting in and out of a car and work with tools commonly found in a home garage.

“We are teaching our students to be problem solvers and innovators,” Muir said.

Competition to get into the program was tough. The program received more than 200 applications. In July 2019, the program received candidacy status from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association, which allowed the program to start accepting students.

Full accreditation will allow graduates to take the exam to become registered occupational therapists. Muir expects the new program to receive full accreditation after completing a self-study over its first two years.

“As the state’s only health sciences university, UAMS is proud to be training the next generation of health care providers and are thrilled to have this partnership with the UA,” said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., vice chancellor for the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus. 🏠



Faculty Mark Koch, O.T.D.; Jeanne Eichler, Ed.D.; Sherry Muir, Ph.D.; and Kandy Salter

Medicine and Meaning Provides Creative Outlet

By Amy Widner

We're more health conscious as a society than ever before. We watch what we eat. We get in our steps. We take time to be mindful. But what if we expanded our ideas about improving health and preventing burnout to include creative activities like taking a photograph or penning a few lines of verse?

Medicine and Meaning — UAMS' new literary journal featuring works of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, images and a faculty profile — puts this theory into action. The first issue is online at medicineandmeaning.uams.edu.

"We did an employee survey at UAMS about two years ago and found that, like it is across the health care field, there was a significant prevalence of burnout," said Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., editor-in-chief for the journal and College of Medicine associate dean for faculty affairs. "One of the factors that prevents people from falling victim to burnout is finding meaning at work through things like creativity and storytelling."

When Messias and Paulette Mehta, M.D. — a professor of hematology/oncology in the Department of Internal Medicine, College of Medicine — and poetry section chief of the journal — started researching how they could have such opportunities at UAMS, they discovered that several medical schools have done so via literary journals.

In fact, Columbia University has a journal and



We all use storytelling to make sense of the world around us, to process our emotions and find meaning. In medicine, we have amazing stories."

an entire program on "narrative medicine" — the use of fiction, prose and poetry to help patients and clinicians alike make sense of the experience of being sick and taking care of people who are sick.

"We all use storytelling to make sense of the world around us, to process our emotions and find meaning," Messias said. "In medicine, we have amazing stories. We have stories of illness and injury but also of recovery, of cure, of hope. We are also in a field that can be somewhat isolating. Few people see the things we see on a daily basis. So storytelling allows us to open up that world a little — let some of our experiences out, while inviting others in."



Non-Fiction Photography Poetry Conversations Fiction

The idea may have started among faculty but once the students got wind of the project, they provided the energy that made it a reality. They named it *Medicine and Meaning*, and students serve on the editorial board alongside faculty and staff.

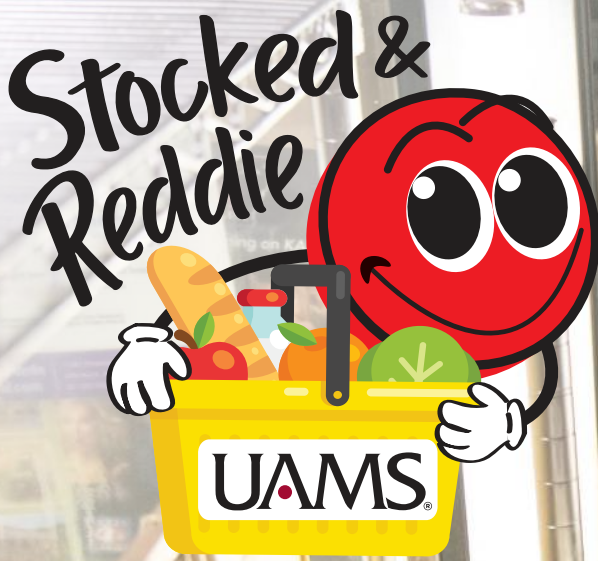
This campus wide diversity is reflected in the first issue. Messias noted there are submissions from most of the colleges on campus and from students, faculty and staff. Brenda Burks, assistant director for the UAMS Faculty Center, serves as assistant editor and agreed that the variety of submissions was a welcome surprise.

“I was so pleased to see the different kinds of pieces that came in. Some were thought provoking,

some funny, some beautiful. It is such a range of work — and a privilege to be part of it,” Burks said.

Submissions will continue to be accepted on a rolling basis, and the next issue will be published when there is enough fresh content. Messias said the feedback has been wonderful so far.

“I’m proud to have received this feedback from a surgeon — stereotypically, one of the most driven, science-focused professionals in our field,” Messias said. “He said, ‘not only is this going to help us become better physicians, but better people.’ I’m glad people see this can help us think more broadly about our work, but also the human experience.” 🏠



Stocked & Reddie Food Pantry Provides Nutritious Food

By Katrina Dupins

When Stocked & Reddie opened at UAMS in July 2019, the food pantry's organizers thought about 600 people may sign up.

A year later, the pantry has over 900 members and provides meals to over 3,000 people every month, when including members' households.



My wife is trying to pick up shifts that she can, but covering the day-to-day costs is tight, It's such a team effort to take care of the kids and try to get through medical school."

"Words can't really express the way I feel about how this program has gone so far," said Stocked & Reddie Coordinator Mande Corbett. "I'm overjoyed and edified at how something that benefits employees, students, residents and interns can also challenge them to participate in its success through volunteering at the pantry."

Stocked & Reddie does more than provide access to fresh produce and more balanced meals for its members, and Donnie Hinton is a perfect example of that. He says coming to the pantry twice a week has changed his perspective on trying foods and his eating habits.

"I'm more conscious about what I eat now, health wise," he said.

Hinton has worked at UAMS for four years in Distribution Services. For his family's Thanksgiving meal last year, he brought a huge salad using vegetables he got from Stocked & Reddie.

"Everyone was shocked," he said. "I normally would have brought a sweet potato pie, pecan pie or some candied yams."

There is fresh produce available every week. That's a goal Tonya Johnson, a registered dietitian and director of Nutrition Services, wanted to make sure the pantry met. She surveyed several other food pantries before Stocked & Reddie opened.

"There were a lot of heavily processed and unhealthy foods," Johnson said. "At Stocked & Reddie, we don't want to just fill bellies. We want to give our members nutritious food."

That effort doesn't go unnoticed by members. Michael Powell says it's been a blessing to his family of five to be able to get fresh produce and proteins. The first-year medical student from

Ohio is a married father of three. On this day, his 4-year-old daughter, Elia, is helping him pick out groceries.

"My wife is trying to pick up shifts that she can, but covering the day-to-day costs is tight," Powell said. "It's such a team effort to take care of the kids and try to get through medical school."

Powell hopes to become a surgeon and practice in a developing country.

There are live food prep demonstrations for members when they enter the pantry. Volunteer and former UAMS Chef Bill Lennartz prepares recipes for sampling. That's particularly helpful when they're offering produce people are not as likely to have experience preparing. He recently showed members how to crack open and prepare a fresh coconut so they could be confident taking one home that day for their families.

Stocked & Reddie repurposes leftovers from the UAMS cafeteria in the form of heat-and-eat meals and salads. They're especially popular among students and single-person households.

"We are now feeding people with food that used to be discarded at the end of each meal," Johnson said. "We don't have food waste anymore. We're able to rescue an average of 80 meals every day from the cafeteria leftovers."

Every member is encouraged to volunteer, even if it's just for a few minutes during their visit to the pantry. That dynamic, Corbett says, creates a different and better atmosphere for everyone involved.

"We want this program to be something that is everybody's. It's not a 'we do this and they do that' kind of thing. There are no giver and taker roles. Everyone can have a role in Stocked & Reddie's success," Corbett said. 🍌

First UAMS TEDx Talks Generate Excitement, Appreciation

By Yavonda Chase



TED talks focus on “ideas worth spreading.”

That philosophy was on display Feb. 7 as UAMS held its first-ever TEDx talks in its Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute.

And now those UAMS ideas worth spreading are available to all after being accepted by TED Conferences LLC for free online distribution.

Nearly 200 people in the audience and another 100 people at simulcast locations eagerly awaited the 10 Team UAMS members who took the stage to tackle a wide variety of issues including physician burnout, mental health, abuse, the power of social media in medicine and more.

“TEDxUAMS was an amazing success, and one I hope we can replicate soon,” said Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. “Months of hard work went into putting on an event of this magnitude, and I want to applaud Organizational Development’s Lisa Wymer and Shelby Fray for spearheading a multi-departmental effort that included Classroom Technology,

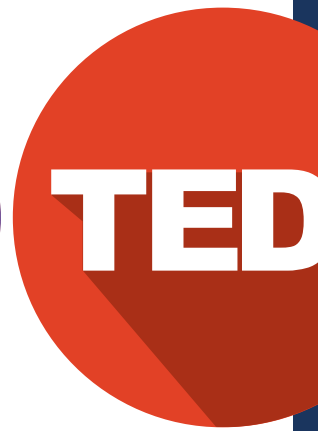
Communications & Marketing and Campus Operations.”

Wymer said she wanted to bring TEDx to UAMS “because events like these bring people together and spark collaboration and innovation.”

The 10 speakers were selected during an audition process in October. Then Wymer and Fray worked with each speaker to refine their presentation. The presentations can be found on the TEDxTalks YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/TEDxTalks.

The speakers and their topics were:

- **Paulette Mehta, M.D.** -- *How Poetry Saved My Life*
- **Tiffany Haynes, Ph.D.** -- *It’s Ok to Not Be Ok*
- **Wendy Ward, Ph.D.** -- *The Future of Health care — Why Patients Should Care*
- **Amber Booth-McCoy** -- *Cause of Death: Kindness is Colorblind*



- **Jennifer Hunt, M.D.** -- *Will the Real Imposter Please Stand Up?*
- **Kimberly Jones** -- *What Abuse Looks Like*
- **Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.** -- *The Power of Meaning in Medicine*
- **Kevin Ryan, J.D.** – *Anti-Vaxxers Love Their Children Too*
- **Joe Thompson, M.D., M.P.H.** -- *Live Well, Die Fast*
- **Jerad Gardner, M.D.** -- *Facebook and Rare Cancer Changed My Life*

“The topics presented by our speakers were purposely varied in subject but also deliberately personal,” said Wymer. “I hope TEDxUAMS felt like a celebration of our team — the innovators, the survivors, the ‘outside of the box’ thinkers — basically a celebration of everything that makes UAMS great.”

Throughout the day, videos of earlier TED talks from around the world were shown, often expanding on themes being discussed by the UAMS speakers.

Audience members said they found the day’s presentations illuminating and thought provoking.

“My favorite part of the day was finding out that all of these ideas are right here at UAMS,” said Mande Corbett, coordinator for Stocked & Reddie, the UAMS food pantry. “Dr. Messias’ burnout talk really resonated with me. I find meaning in what I do, but my intensity level can get off balance. It was a good reminder for me to check myself.”

Claudia Carberry, a registered dietitian and member of the kidney transplant team, said she really appreciated the health care focus of so many of the presentations.

“Collectively, the speakers gave us ideas on how to prevent burnout, and do our jobs in a caring and compassionate way.” 🍷





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- Arkansas' ONLY comprehensive academic health sciences center
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- A STATE-OF-THE-ART hospital
- A STATEWIDE NETWORK of regional centers
- ADVANCED digital health programs
- Research funding of more than \$158.1 million across UAMS and UAMS researchers working in affiliated institutions.
- SEVEN INSTITUTES: 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.
- Private support is ESSENTIAL TO OUR MISSION to engage in activities that result in better health. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift today by calling us at 501-686-8200 or giving online at uamshealth.com/giving. All gifts are important and greatly appreciated.