

UAMS News Bureau

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**College of Nursing's Leanne Lefler, Ph.D.,
Invested in Women's Cardiovascular Health Professorship**

LITTLE ROCK – Leanne Lefler, Ph.D., APRN, an associate professor in the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Nursing, has been invested in the Women's Cardiovascular Health Professorship.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in Arkansas. The endowed Women's Cardiovascular Health Professorship supports the College of Nursing's health care, research and education programs focused on women's heart health.

Lefler succeeds Jean McSweeney, Ph.D., RN, who held the professorship from its establishment in 2018 until her retirement as associate dean for research in the College of Nursing earlier this year.

"I'm honored to follow Dr. McSweeney, whose own work recently showed there's still much to be done to educate women about the risks of heart disease," said Lefler. "That education will continue, as will the search for improved treatment options and better patient outcomes."

An endowed professorship is among the highest academic honors a university can bestow on a faculty member. A professorship is a \$500,000 endowment established to support the educational, research and clinical activities of its holder, who will lead future innovations in medicine and health care. Those named to a professorship are among the most highly regarded scientists, physicians and professors in their fields of expertise.

"Dr. Lefler is an exceptional researcher and educator, and I can think of no one more ideally suited to take up the mantle of Dr. McSweeney, who has been a friend and colleague to me for many years, and a profound advocate for women's cardiovascular health for decades," said Patricia Cowan, Ph.D., RN, dean and professor in the UAMS College of Nursing.

Lefler came to UAMS in 2003 as a clinical assistant professor in the College of Nursing. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1982 from Arkansas Tech University, her

Master of Science in Nursing in 2001 from the University of Central Arkansas, and her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science in 2006 from UAMS.

In 2016, Lefler was one of only 10 nurses in the country to be named a Breakthrough Leader in Nursing by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

In addition to authoring multiple manuscripts and publishing several abstracts, Lefler has worked on a multitude of research and program grants throughout her career, focusing mainly on women's health and preventing heart disease. She is working on a research award of more than \$4 million to study a comparison of digital health care delivery to standard in-person care in heart failure patients, as well as patient satisfaction with digital health services.

Lefler is a Fellow in the American Heart Association and this year was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. She serves on the board of directors for the Southern Nursing Research Society and American Heart Association. She maintains active memberships and supports the work of the American Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

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 — COPD, colon cancer surgery, heart failure, hip replacement, knee replacement and lung cancer surgery. UAMS has 2,876 students, 898 medical residents and four 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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