

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation Awarded \$749,968
to Improve Efforts to Reduce Violent Crime in Schools**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Institute for Digital Health & Innovation has received a three-year, \$749,968 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to help reduce violent crime in and around Arkansas schools.

The project, the School Telemedicine in Arkansas for Lessons in Trauma-informed Education (STARLITE), aims to improve school security at three pilot sites in the school districts of Jasper, Lamar and Magazine. It will provide students, teachers, parents and administrators with the tools they need to recognize, respond quickly to and help prevent acts of violence.

“School violence nationwide has been a growing problem for many years,” Joseph Sanford, M.D, the institute’s interim director said. “The institute is eager to take part in any effort to reduce this violence and hope to demonstrate how digital technology can help train educators.”

Stanley Ellis, Ed.D., is the principal investigator for the project and is director of education for the institute.

“The goal is to address specific areas of training: preventing violence and assessing the threat to determine how best to intervene,” Ellis said. “School personnel and students will be educated on how to prevent violence against themselves and others, including anti-bullying training.”

School officials in Jasper, Lamar and Magazine will be trained in how to respond to mental health crises and how to coordinate between law enforcement and school personnel in handling threats.

The Harrison-based Seed Digging Wellness Center will provide support and training in schools for the project. Seed Digging uses an approach that blends evidence-based counseling techniques into a simple language to empower children with tools to overcome emotional and behavioral struggles and boost self-confidence. It is effective

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against suicidal thoughts and behaviors, violence, aggression, and other emotional and behavioral health issues and addictions.

“We are very excited to be a part of this project and to partner with UAMS and school districts in Arkansas to empower teachers and counselors with tools to help students build self-confidence and move from surviving to thriving,” Shawna Burns said.

Burns is a licensed professional counselor-supervisor and a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor-clinical supervisor with Seed Digging.

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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