

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release**  
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**UAMS Hip and Knee Replacement and Spine Surgery  
Recognized By Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield**

LITTLE ROCK – The Hip and Knee Replacement and Spine Surgery programs at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) have both earned a Blue Distinction Plus designation by Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

UAMS is the only hospital in central Arkansas to have Blue Distinction Plus designation in Hip and Knee Replacement and the only hospital in Arkansas to have distinctions in both specialties.

“These distinctions are a testament to the high quality of our care and to our commitment to making that care affordable,” said C. Lowry Barnes, M.D., chair of the UAMS Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Blue Distinction Specialty Care is a national designation program awarded by local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield companies that recognizes health care providers who demonstrate expertise in delivering quality and affordable health care to meet consumers’ specialty care needs safely, effectively and cost efficiently.

The goal of the program is to help consumers find both quality and value for their specialty care needs, while encouraging health care professionals to improve the overall quality and delivery of care nationwide.

“This designation is meant to help guide patients in making specialty care decisions. It signifies that the provider has gone through a rigorous, independent evaluation process based on national standards and been found to provide excellent care at reasonable cost,” said Curtis Barnett, president and CEO of Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

To earn the Blue Distinction Plus designation, UAMS had to demonstrate its ability to provide affordable care in addition to quality care, treatment expertise and better overall patient results, which included lower complication rates and fewer hospital readmissions for patients undergoing hip and knee replacements, as well as spine surgeries.

The distinction is a credit to the care teams in each program, which for the Hip and Knee program includes surgeons Barnes; Simon Mears, M.D., Ph.D.; Jeffrey Stambough, M.D.; and Benjamin Stronach, M.D. For the Spine Surgery programs, the doctors are David Bumpass, M.D.; Samuel Overley, M.D.; Richard McCarthy, M.D.; T. Glenn Pait, M.D.; Noojan Kazemi, M.D.; and T.W. Morris III, M.D.

“The standards that define Blue Distinction – affordable, high-quality care – are fundamental to our mission of improving the health of all Arkansans at UAMS. We welcome this opportunity to be evaluated and verified through this rigorous designation process and are proud of this recognition,” said Steppe Mette, M.D., senior vice chancellor of UAMS Health and CEO of UAMS Medical Center.

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](http://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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