

**News Release**  
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## **UAMS Launches Sexual Assault Assessment Program in Arkansas Hospitals, Crisis Centers**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' (UAMS) Institute for Digital Health & Innovation is launching specialized, 24/7 digital health services for victims of sexual assault. This unique care platform will be part of the Sexual Assault Assessment Program in emergency departments and crisis centers across the state.

Through real-time video technology, UAMS will partner with emergency departments and crisis centers in rural and underserved communities to provide trauma-informed, patient-centered care to patients who have experienced sexual violence. Local clinicians are virtually connected with experienced Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) or Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). Together, clinicians provide medical-forensic sexual assault examinations at no cost to the patient.

“This new digital health program increases accessibility to expert resources and allows us to provide victims with the care and support they need,” said institute director Joseph Sanford, M.D. “By expanding our reach, we can help more victims and also provide assistance to law enforcement as needed.”

UAMS SANE assistant director Sherrie Searcy, RN, BSN, SANE-A, added, “This program ensures patients have access to expert care, regardless of where they live.”

Arkansas is one of four demonstration sites in the country to receive federal funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime to establish digital health sexual assault services that will improve care, access and quality of sexual assault forensic exams. The other three sites are Alaska, South Dakota and Texas.

Various UAMS digital health programs and rural sites have collaborated to implement the TeleSAFE/[TeleSANE program](#), which will also include activities and outreach opportunities to educate their respective communities on sexual assault.

NWA Center for Sexual Assault in Springdale and Drew Memorial Health System in Monticello are the first TeleSANE collaborating locations that, as of today, now offer the extension of digital health services for sexual assault care in their communities. UAMS

is prepared to serve an additional 71 locations throughout the state of Arkansas to ensure victims of sexual assault have access to expert care and resources.

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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