

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS Student Moriah Hollaway Receives Prominent Award
from U.S. Public Health Service**

LITTLE ROCK — Moriah Hollaway, a senior at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), has been selected to receive a 2021 Excellence in Public Health Award from the U.S. Public Health Service Physician Professional Advisory Committee.

The national award is given to medical students who are public health champions advancing the U.S. Public Health Service’s (USPHS) mission to “protect, promote and advance the health and safety of our nation” and who are helping address public health issues in their community.

The award was created by the USPHS to inspire medical students to commit themselves to public health and to become leaders in their field. Each year, every U.S. medical school can nominate one student who has worked hard to increase awareness about health care and put that knowledge into action.

Hollaway, who graduated in May with a dual degree (M.D. and Master of Public Health) from the UAMS College of Medicine and UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, was selected for this prestigious award for her work on the impact of COVID-19 on surgical case volume and finances at UAMS.

From March 17 to June 7, 2020, UAMS temporarily postponed and rescheduled many elective surgeries and procedures because of the pandemic.

Through analysis of data gathered by UAMS during 2020, Hollaway examined surgical postponements and cancellations and the impact of that financially on UAMS. Hollaway completed this work as part of her capstone research project, known as the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) in the College of Public Health.

Hollaway hypothesized that the mandated elective surgery cessation, along with other COVID-19 related case cancellations, had a substantial economic impact on UAMS. Her findings showed a 16.2% decrease in case volume and a 13.8% decrease in financial charges levied during 2020 on average when compared to 2017-2019. Most case deficits occurred between March and May.

"We are very proud of Moriah for being recognized with this national public health award. Certainly, the pandemic has taught us the critical importance of public health, and it is so encouraging to see medical students and new physicians also studying for the MPH degree and already making a difference for our communities," said James Graham, M.D., UAMS College of Medicine's executive associate dean for academic affairs.

According to USPHS Commander Reed Grimes, M.D., MPH, "This award is a testament to the education provided by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Medicine and to the high caliber of your students. We hope that you will encourage your faculty and students to continue their strong work in public health."

For completion of her ILE project, Hollaway worked with three faculty members in the College of Public Health — Victor Cardenas, M.D., Ph.D., MPH, associate professor; Joseph Bates, M.D., MS, professor and associate dean for Public Health Practice; and Kevin Ryan, J.D., MA, associate professor and associate dean for Student and Alumni Affairs from the College of Public Health; as well as Hanna Jensen, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor from the College of Medicine.

"Dr. Hollaway is an excellent student with a desire to incorporate her population science training into her provision of health care to individuals and families," said Ryan. "She has a very bright future as a physician and public health practitioner."

"The important research Dr. Hollaway conducted has the potential to inform physicians, hospital administrators and public health policy makers of the impact on the population of large-scale elective surgery rescheduling during a public health crisis," said Bates. "Dr. Hollaway developed an excellent research plan that yielded important results."

Hollaway will begin as a general surgery residency at UAMS on July 1. She's specifically interested in the intersection of surgery and public health, such as cancer screening, trauma care and gun violence prevention.

"I'm grateful for the professors and physicians who guided me on my journey to complete my M.D. and MPH degrees. I would specifically like to thank Dr. Cardenas, Dr. Bates, Professor Ryan, and Dr. Jensen for their assistance in completing my final ILE project," said Hollaway. "I am thankful for the opportunity they gave me to combine my passions for surgery and public health, as well as to work on a project that has a practical impact on UAMS."

Originally from Maumelle, Hollaway earned an undergraduate degree in Molecular Biology from Lipscomb University before entering the dual degree program at UAMS. She is the oldest of eight children and will begin her residency alongside her husband, Wesley White, who will be a psychiatry resident.

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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