

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**Michael Thomsen, Ph.D., Named Director  
of UAMS Center for the Study of Obesity**

LITTLE ROCK — Michael Thomsen, Ph.D., has been named the director of the Center for the Study of Obesity in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS).

The Center for the Study of Obesity will develop not only active research programs related to obesity prevention but also provide technical assistance and leadership in the public health practice community throughout the state to prevent and reduce obesity among Arkansans.

“I am very happy to have Dr. Thomsen join the college,” said [Mark Williams](#), Ph.D., dean of the [College of Public Health](#). “His years of experience in nutrition and obesity prevention will help the college build a collaborative center that can build research relationships within UAMS and with institutions and companies outside UAMS.”

Thomsen will develop active research programs related to obesity prevention, collaborate with researchers across UAMS on obesity-related work and contribute to the college’s diverse doctoral and postdoctoral programs.

Thomsen comes to UAMS from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (UA) and the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, where he has worked for the past 23 years. Most recently, he served as a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

“I am excited for this opportunity to put my research expertise to use by growing the Center for the Study of Obesity,” said Thomsen. “I look forward to building relationships and collaborating with partners at UAMS and outside UAMS to improve the health of Arkansans.”

Thomsen’s research emphasizes the interface between the food distribution system and human health. His work has improved understanding of environmental contributors to excess weight gain among Arkansas school children and has helped identify student

populations at high risk for childhood obesity. He is also studying the role of nutrition programs in addressing food insecurity and improving diet and health outcomes.

Thomsen's mentoring and teaching has been recognized with the Jack G. Justus Endowment for Teaching Excellence and the Alumni Society Outstanding Advising Award at UA.

Thomsen completed his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Agricultural Economics from Utah State University in 1993 and 1994, respectively. He received a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Minnesota in 1998.

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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