

**UAMS News Bureau**

Office of Communications & Marketing  
4301 West Markham # 890  
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

[uamshealth.com/news](http://uamshealth.com/news)



**News Release**  
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**Media Contacts:**

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998  
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260  
[leslie@uams.edu](mailto:leslie@uams.edu)

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994  
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354  
[yavonda@uams.edu](mailto:yavonda@uams.edu)

**UAMS Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Receives Awards for Three Outreach Programs**

LITTLE ROCK — Three programs in the Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DDEI) at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) have been named recipients of the 2021 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine for the first time.

The Virtual Junior STEM Academy, Virtual Senior STEM Academy and the UAMS DDEI Laddered Pipeline Program will be featured in the magazine's September 2021 issue, along with 76 other programs.

*INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine is the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education, and the award honors colleges and universities that encourage and assist students from underrepresented groups to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Winners were selected based on their efforts to help students consider careers in STEM through mentoring, teaching, research by implementing successful programs and initiatives.

"These awards highlight the value our programs bring to the diversification of our health care workforce," said Gloria Richard-Davis, M.D., MBA, the division's executive director.

"In order to reach health equity, we need to diversify our workforce. To be successful, we cannot focus only on college-level students. We must engage our students early on," she added.

The Virtual Junior STEM Academy is for children in kindergarten through fifth grade while the Virtual Senior STEM Academy is open to students in sixth through eighth grade. Both academies are typically offered in-person but were held virtually in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19.

During the five-week summer academies, the elementary and middle school students learn about various topics in STEM fields, and they are also exposed to different careers in health care.

“One component that sets our programs apart is that the STEM looks like the children, purposefully. They see scientists, engineers, doctors and other children and professionals who look like them,” said Amber Booth-McCoy, DDEI manager of intercultural education and program coordinator for both academies.

“By simply creating a STEM curriculum with culturally-relevant programming that looks like these students, they engage in a different way because it’s applicable to their own neighborhoods and their own lives,” said Booth-McCoy.

Additionally, the UAMS DDEI Laddered Pipeline Program encompasses all six of DDEI’s summer outreach programs.

In addition to Junior- and Senior STEM Academy, the pipeline program includes the Virtual Academy of Pre-Health Scholars (grades 9-12); Student-Athlete STEM Academy (grades 9-12); Pre-Health Scholars Program (college freshmen and sophomores); and Pre-Medical Summer Scholars II (college juniors and seniors).

Each academy or program within the pipeline is a feeder to the next program, intentionally designed to take students from kindergarten through their senior year of college.

“Frequently students have the aptitude and interest, but they lose their steam because they aren’t encouraged during the journey. In fact, they are often dissuaded. Many of our students of color acknowledge experiencing blatant discouragement, so our laddered pipeline programs fill those gaps in our leaky pipelines supporting students from kindergarten to college,” said Richard-Davis.

The Laddered Pipeline Program provides a variety of resources for high school and college students, including ACT prep, MCAT prep, clinical simulations, preceptors, advanced science courses and developing personal statements for college and medical school applications. The students are also exposed to nearly every health care profession at UAMS, with the opportunity to network with faculty and students from all five UAMS colleges.

To enroll in DDEI summer outreach programs, students must submit an application and be accepted into the program. Applications open in February each year.

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* recognized UAMS

Medical Center as a Best Hospital for 2021-22; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide for the third year; and named five areas as high performing — colon cancer surgery, diabetes, hip replacement, knee replacement and stroke. *Forbes* magazine ranked UAMS as seventh in the nation on its Best Employers for Diversity list. UAMS also ranked in the top 30% nationwide on *Forbes*' Best Employers for Women list and was the only Arkansas employer included. UAMS has 2,876 students, 898 medical residents and six 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, 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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