

UAMS News Bureau

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

uamshealth.com/news



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Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354
Yavonda@uams.edu

**UAMS Earns National Recognition for Efforts
to Improve Stroke Treatment**

LITTLE ROCK — The Comprehensive Stroke Program at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has been recognized by the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Stroke Association for the seventh consecutive year for excellence in treating stroke patients.

The program received the AHA’s Get With the Guidelines - Stroke Quality Achievement Award in the Gold Plus category, as well as Honor Roll Elite recognition in the Target: Stroke category.

The Gold Plus Achievement Award is given to hospitals that have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines for at least two consecutive years. This is UAMS’ seventh year to receive the honor.

The Honor Roll Elite honor is reserved for hospitals that attained silver or gold achievement status and administered crucial medication to stroke patients within an hour of their arrival, at least 85% of the time.

“We are honored to be recognized by the American Heart Association for our continued commitment in providing excellent stroke care to Arkansans across the state,” said Marzella Backus, MNSc, RN, director of the UAMS Stroke program.

“Participating in the Get With The Guidelines program provides a great tool to put evidenced-based practice and guidelines in place which gives our patients the best opportunity for survival as well as improved functional outcomes after stroke,” Backus said. “Achieving these awards during the global COVID-19 pandemic is yet another testament to the dedication, hard work and commitment of our health care team. They are all truly warriors in a daily fight for our patients.”

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death and a leading cause of adult disability in the United States. On average, someone in the country suffers a stroke every 40 seconds, and nearly 795,000 people suffer a new or recurrent stroke each year. Early stroke detection

and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability and speeding recovery times.

In June, UAMS also received its recertification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by The Joint Commission, an independent, nonprofit organization that evaluates and accredits more than 20,000 health care organizations in the United States.

The certification is the most demanding stroke certification and is designed for those hospitals that have specific abilities to receive and treat the most complex stroke cases.

In 2018, UAMS became the first Comprehensive Stroke Center in Arkansas and remains one of only two in the state.

The Get With The Guidelines-Stroke program was developed to assist health care professionals with providing the most up-to-date, research-based guidelines for treating stroke patients. Participants also provide education to patients to help them manage their health and rehabilitation at home.

“We are pleased to recognize UAMS Health for its commitment to stroke care,” said Lee H. Schwamm, M.D., national chairperson of the AHA’s Quality Oversight Committee.

“Research has shown that hospitals adhering to clinical measures through the Get With The Guidelines quality improvement initiative can often see fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates,” said Schwamm, who is also the executive vice chair of neurology and director of acute stroke services at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

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 or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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