

UAMS News Bureau

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UAMS' AR-Connect to Provide Mental Health Care to Those Displaced by Hurricane Ida

LITTLE ROCK — AR-Connect, a University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) program that provides mental health care via live video, is offering its services to Gulf Coast natives forced to relocate to Arkansas due to the devastation left behind by Hurricane Ida.

The Category 4 hurricane made landfall Sunday and led many in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama to evacuate their homes for what may be an extended period due to flooding and downed power lines.

To accommodate any evacuees in Arkansas needing assistance with mental health issues, such as medication management, substance abuse, anxiety or depression, AR-Connect's therapists are offering their services at no cost, regardless of the patient's insurance status. The only requirement is that anyone seeking treatment through the virtual-care program must be residing in the state, even if temporarily.

Formed in part by a grant from the federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, AR-Connect is a partnership between UAMS and the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Aging, Adult and Behavioral Health Services.

To access care through AR Connect, simply call the AR-Connect call center at (501) 526-3563 or (800) 482-9921. The AR-Connect call center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call center personnel will ensure the caller does not need a referral to an emergency department and will take their contact information and arrange an appointment with an AR-Connect team member.

Most callers are able to see an AR-Connect team member within one business day. The virtual clinic sees patients Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. No medical referral is necessary to access the program.

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 (where AR Connect is housed), 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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