

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release**  
**Sept. 23, 2021**

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**UAMS Receives Additional \$4.75 Million to Train  
Primary Care Physicians, Improve Rural Health Care**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received an additional \$4.75 million in federal grant money to continue efforts to improve health care in rural Arkansas through training and retaining primary care physicians.

The supplemental award from the Health Resources and Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, comes in the third year of a four-year medical student education grant.

UAMS initially received \$4.6 million in 2019, followed by an additional \$2.83 million in 2020, to fund a multipronged approach to enhancing medical student education at UAMS as part of the Arkansas Medical Education Primary Care Partnerships project.

The project aims to recruit and retain medical students from rural and underserved areas of Arkansas in the hopes that they return to practice in those areas.

It also aims to create more opportunities for students to practice primary care in those areas through service projects and mentoring; to increase the number of rural clinical rotation sites; to provide training and development opportunities for new faculty at those sites; and to strengthen partnerships with the Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Arkansas Rural Health Partnership and historically black colleges and universities – the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

“This continued funding allows us to make further progress in addressing the physician shortage in Arkansas, particularly in rural areas, as part of our mission to improve the health of all Arkansans,” said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, UAMS chancellor and CEO of UAMS Health.

The number of available physicians per population in Arkansas is among the lowest in the nation, a fact that Patterson said has been highlighted by the pandemic – particularly the delta variant that hit Arkansas hard.

As a means of addressing the physician shortage, the new funds will be used to support a new accelerated M.D. program – the first and only such program in Arkansas – at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville, and to upgrade student education equipment on the main campus and at clinical training sites.

“UAMS is very excited to receive this support enabling our launch of the three-year track M.D. degree in Arkansas,” said Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice chancellor of UAMS and dean of the College of Medicine. “Medical students who are accepted into this highly competitive program are exceptional. They are academically strong, mature and are dedicated to becoming primary care physicians to serve Arkansans in communities where we need them.”

The three-year track for medical students who plan to specialize in primary care (family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology or pediatrics) and have the necessary credentials began in July at the Fayetteville campus.

Until this year, UAMS medical students were only able to complete their third and fourth years of training at the Northwest campus. The three-year track is prepared to accommodate up to 20 highly qualified medical trainees per year.

“Completing all required goals and objectives to earn an M.D. degree in three years is extremely challenging,” said Linda Worley, M.D., associate regional dean of the UAMS College of Medicine at the Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville. “These dedicated medical students begin their studies early and take few breaks. Clinical training begins in the first two weeks and continues throughout the entire three years. Shortening the training to three years instead of four saves students one quarter of the debt burden, ultimately launching them into clinical practice where we need them one year earlier.”

“This continued grant funding is an important element in enabling UAMS to carry out its goals, and the ultimate winner will be the residents of this state,” said Richard H. Turnage, M.D., UAMS College of Medicine executive associate dean for clinical affairs.

The project to improve access to health care statewide is a partnership between the UAMS College of Medicine, UAMS Regional Campuses, the UAMS Department of Family & Preventive Medicine and the UAMS Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

UAMS’ Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville is already home to more than 300 students in the colleges of medicine, nursing, pharmacy and health professions. It serves Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Boone and Newton counties.

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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