

**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**  
**Nov. 2, 2021**

**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 Selects Laura Dunn, M.D., to Lead  
Department of Psychiatry, Psychiatric Research Institute**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has selected Laura B. Dunn, M.D., as the next chair of the Department of Psychiatry in the UAMS College of Medicine and director of the Psychiatric Research Institute.

Currently a professor and section chief for Geriatric Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine, Dunn will start at UAMS on Feb. 1, 2022.

“We are thrilled to have Dr. Dunn join UAMS as we continue to enhance our excellent clinical, research and education programs in psychiatry,” said Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice chancellor and dean of the College of Medicine. “In addition to her leadership experience across these mission areas, Dr. Dunn brings extensive clinical and research expertise in geriatric psychiatry and psycho-oncology.”

“We look forward to welcoming Dr. Dunn to UAMS,” said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, UAMS chancellor and CEO of UAMS Health. “Mental health is an important part of our mission of caring for the health and well-being of Arkansans. I know that Dr. Dunn is going to be tremendous asset to both the Department of Psychiatry and the Psychiatric Research Institute.”

Dunn also will be invested as the Marie Wilson Howells Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The chair, the oldest and largest endowed chair at UAMS, was last held by G. Richard Smith, M.D., who retired June 1 after 40 years of leadership and service including chair of Psychiatry in 2001-2013 and 2018-2021 and as executive vice chancellor and dean of the College of Medicine in 2013-2015.

Since Smith’s retirement, John Spollen, M.D., has served the interim chair and director.

“I am grateful to Dr. Spollen for his excellent and ongoing service as interim chair since Dr. Smith’s retirement,” said Smyth.

Dunn has held numerous leadership roles at Stanford since her recruitment in 2015 as director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program and director of the

Geriatric Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic at Stanford Health Care. She became Geriatric Psychiatry Section Chief in 2017, and has also led numerous departmental initiatives in quality improvement, wellness, and professional development.

From 2007 to 2015, she served as director of Psycho-Oncology in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, where she was invested in the Gloria Hubner Endowed Chair in Psycho-Oncology in 2013.

Dunn graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College with a bachelor of arts in linguistics before earning a medical degree at the University of California, San Francisco. She completed a psychiatry residency as well as a fellowship in geriatric psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego, where she went on to serve as an assistant professor from 2002 to 2007.

Dunn has served as principal investigator and in other roles on numerous NIH- and foundation-funded studies in geriatric psychiatry, psycho-oncology and empirical ethics. She has been active and has held leadership positions in national professional organizations including the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry and the American College of Psychiatrists. She is board certified in psychiatry and geriatric psychiatry.

Her husband, James E. Dunn, Esq., is an accomplished trial lawyer. They have two children – Leah, a freshman at New York University, and Tara, a high school senior.

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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