

## UAMS News Bureau

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## Patricia Cowan, Ph.D., RN, Selected as Evaluator for Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

LITTLE ROCK — Patricia Cowan, Ph.D., RN, the dean of the University of Arkansas for Medical Science (UAMS) College of Nursing, was selected as an on-site evaluator for the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), an accrediting agency for baccalaureate, graduate and residency programs in nursing.

Cowan was officially selected as an evaluator in September 2021 and completed training in November. She will begin serving as an evaluator in spring 2022. On-site evaluators travel to different regions of the country to assess nursing programs at institutions in all 50 states.

“Being involved as an on-site reviewer is a profound way to serve the profession by assuring that nursing programs provide quality education to prepare nurses for the current and future health care workforce,” Cowan said.

There are about 150 on-site evaluations in an average year, and Cowan said she expects to participate in about two per year. All evaluators are unpaid volunteers, and there is no time limit for the role.

Typically, teams of three to five evaluators participate in on-site evaluations. A team leader who has participated in multiple site visits will generally coordinate with deans of nursing programs and then will lead the writing of the team report. As a novice CCNE on-site reviewer, Cowan will be part of the on-site evaluation team.

CCNE is the autonomous accrediting arm of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The commission is officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for the accreditation of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education programs in accredited institutions of higher education located or chartered in the U.S. or its territories.

Accreditation by CCNE is intended to hold nursing programs accountable, to evaluate the success of nursing programs in meeting outcomes and to assess the extent to which those programs meet standards, inform the public and foster improvement. CCNE

currently accredits 1,969 nursing education programs in the United States, as well as 50 entry-to-practice RN nurse residency programs.

“The opportunity to serve as a CCNE evaluator will foster my own growth in the accreditation processes at a time when changes to the AACN Essentials will influence the standards by which nursing programs are evaluated,” Cowan said.

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a 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. 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 3,047 students, 873 medical residents and fellows, 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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