

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release**  
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**UAMS Receives \$10 Million to Expand Community-Based  
Outreach Efforts to Increase COVID-19 Vaccinations**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has been awarded a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fund COVID-19 outreach efforts across Arkansas.

UAMS will use the grant to mobilize and deploy community health workers, patient navigators and social support specialists to the most vulnerable and medically underserved communities across the state, including racial and ethnic minority groups.

The focus will be to strengthen vaccine confidence by reaching out directly to community members to educate them about the vaccine, helping people access resources, assisting individuals in making a vaccine appointment, and assisting individuals with transportation or other needs to get to their vaccine appointments.

“This funding will allow UAMS to expand both our community health worker collaborative and our service area into more rural areas. It will also allow us to engage with new target populations to remove structural barriers to COVID-19 vaccinations in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways,” said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., director of the UAMS Office of Community Health and Research.

The HHS grant, through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), is part of \$66.5 million in American Rescue Plan funding to eight grantees to expand outreach efforts in 38 states and the District of Columbia to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence and vaccinations.

“This grant will have far-reaching health benefits for the entire country and for our state,” said UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. “It will require a rapid and efficient start-up and will involve collaboration among multiple departments across UAMS, as well as state, local and regional community organizations. We are very appreciative of HHS and HRSA for making this possible.”

“Building vaccine confidence is critical to increasing vaccinations,” HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a news release. “This investment by the Biden-Harris

administration further expands our progress in partnering with trusted local messengers to deliver needed information on COVID-19 vaccines. This funding will help even more community-based organizations build confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine among people in their community who may not have been vaccinated yet.”

For more about the HHS grant and all the recipients, visit

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/02/08/hhs-provides-66-5-million-expand-community-based-outreach-efforts-increase-covid-19-vaccinations.html>

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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