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News Release
March 4, 2022

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**UAMS, Farmington Public Schools
Creating Healthy Meals for Students**

FAYETTEVILLE — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and Farmington Public Schools are working together to create healthier meals and eating environments for students.

The school district recently updated and strengthened its wellness policy to increase whole grains in meals, prioritize Arkansas-grown produce and products and prominently display healthy food choices like fresh fruits and vegetables to encourage healthier eating among students.

The school made the changes after the UAMS Office of Community Health and Research (UAMS CHR) Healthy Food Systems team assessed the district's current standards and made recommendations using the "Creating Healthy Policies in Schools: Healthy Foods Toolkit." The updated policy includes seven new standards:

- Meals sold to students during the school day and during after-school programs must be at least 51% whole grains, as specified by USDA guidelines.
- Meals sold to students must contain no more than 10% of calories from added sugars, following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- School meals will include Arkansas-grown food that is processed and packaged by companies committed to sustainable practices.
- USDA Smart Snacks standards for beverages sold in elementary and middle schools shall also be applied in high schools, and beverages containing caffeine will not be sold on the high school campus.
- Meals and snacks sold to students will not contain artificial sweeteners.
- Meals and snacks sold to students will not contain dyes.

- The healthiest options, such as salads and fruit, will be prominently displayed in the cafeterias to encourage students to make healthier food decisions.

“We not only want to feed students, we want to help them make healthy food choices,” said Farmington School District Child Nutrition Director Wendy Burrus.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), empty calories from added sugars and solid fats contribute to 40% of daily calories for children ages 2-18. Many of these empty calories come from soda, fruit drinks, dairy desserts, grain desserts, pizza and whole milk. Eating a healthier diet can help children perform better in school and can greatly reduce their risk of developing several health issues, such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, dental cavities and more.

“Students receive up to half of their calories during the school day,” said Bonnie Faitak, who leads the UAMS CHR’s Healthy Food Systems team. “The changes made by Farmington Schools will help nudge students toward consuming healthier meals, which can help them be more successful at school and can help them live longer and healthier lives.”

UAMS has worked with Farmington Public Schools for the last three years as part of the CDC’s Sodium Reduction in Communities Program and Creating Healthy Environments for Schools (CHEFS) program. To learn more about the CHR Healthy Food Systems projects, visit nwa.uams.edu/chr/healthyfoods.

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 or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

The UAMS Northwest Regional Campus includes 288 medical, pharmacy, nursing and health professions students, 64 medical and pharmacy residents, two sports medicine fellows, and 1,000 community-based faculty. The campus has nine clinics including a student-led clinic and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Faculty conduct research to reduce health disparities. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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