

UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 West Markham # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

uamshealth.com/news



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Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354
yavonda@uams.edu

**UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute
Launches Statewide Cancer Navigation Program**

LITTLE ROCK — The [UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute](#) is implementing a new statewide patient navigation program to help cancer patients across the state access needed prevention, screening, treatment and support services. The program serves all Arkansans regardless of provider.

“We know advances in cancer treatment may not reach underserved communities, especially in low socioeconomic areas and among racial and ethnic minorities,” said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., associate director of Community Outreach and Engagement at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. “Cancer navigation is critical to improve access to cancer prevention and care.”

For Cancer Institute Director and UAMS Vice Chancellor Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., cancer navigation is a moral imperative. “All Arkansans deserve access to state-of-the-art cancer screening regardless of economic or geographic differences. In addition, every Arkansan should have access to the best possible treatment including the new and novel cellular therapy and potentially lifesaving clinical trials,” he said.

The cancer navigation program currently consists of a nine-member team of nurse navigators and locally placed community health experts who provide a broad range of support, including:

- Appointment scheduling for screenings, tests, follow-up visits and other physician recommended care
- Health education
- Patient and caregiver navigation to social support services
- Clinical trial access

Patient navigators and their locations are:

- [Misty Bridger](#), Jonesboro
- [Santrice Kearney](#), Pine Bluff
- [Carline Massey](#), Texarkana
- [Robin Thrower](#), Magnolia
- [Luzanna Tubb](#), Fayetteville
- Ryan Williams, Little Rock
- [Elizabeth Rodriguez](#), Batesville

[Christina McSperritt](#) and [Alisha Howell](#) serve as nurse navigators, helping patients through the treatment process by connecting them to resources and information to make informed decisions.

To connect with a navigator, patients may call 1-855-569-3691 or email COE@uams.edu. A physician referral is not required.

The program is informed by a 15-member Community Advisory Board consisting of cancer survivors, caregivers, doctors, nurses and community leaders.

Cancer patient navigation programs have emerged over the last decade as an effective strategy in improving patient access to the full continuum of cancer care. The program is key piece of the Cancer Institute's progress toward becoming a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designed cancer center. Most NCI-designated cancer centers have patient navigation programs.

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. 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 11,000 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](#).

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