

UAMS News Bureau

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**For 8th Year, UAMS Receives National Recognition
for Providing High-Quality Stroke Care**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received the American Heart Association’s GoldPlus Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Quality Achievement Award for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment, ultimately leading to more lives saved and reduced disability.

In addition to receiving the GoldPlus award for the eighth consecutive year, UAMS also received Honor Roll Elite recognition in the Target: Stroke category for the second consecutive year. The latter honor is reserved for hospitals that attained silver or gold achievement status and administered crucial medication to stroke patients within an hour of their arrival, at least 85% of the time.

“We are thrilled to be recognized yet again for our continued commitment to providing excellent stroke care to Arkansans,” said Marzella Backus, MNSc, RN, director of the UAMS Stroke program.

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, so brain cells die. Stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability and accelerating recovery times.

Get With The Guidelines puts the expertise of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association to work for hospitals nationwide, helping ensure patient care is aligned with the latest research- and evidence-based guidelines. Get With The Guidelines-Stroke is an in-hospital program for improving stroke care by promoting consistent adherence to these guidelines, which can minimize the long-term effects of a stroke and even prevent death.

“Participating in the Get With The Guidelines program provides a great tool to put evidence-based practice and guidelines in place, which gives our patients the best

opportunity for survival, as well as improved functional outcomes after stroke,” Backus said.

On average, someone in the country suffers a stroke every 40 seconds, and nearly 800,000 people suffer a new or recurrent stroke each year. Early stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability and speeding recovery times.

In 2018, UAMS became the first Comprehensive Stroke Center in Arkansas. It remains one of only two in the state. That certification by The Joint Commission — an independent, nonprofit organization that evaluates and accredits more than 20,000 health care organizations across the country — is the most demanding stroke certification and is designed for hospitals that have specific abilities to receive and treat the most complex stroke cases.

Get With The Guidelines is the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s hospital-based quality improvement program that provides hospitals with the latest research-based guidelines. Developed with the goal of saving lives and hastening recovery, Get With The Guidelines has touched the lives of more than 12 million patients since 2001.

Each year, program participants qualify for the achievement award by demonstrating how their organization has committed to providing quality care for stroke patients. In addition to following treatment guidelines, participants educate patients to help them manage their health and recovery at home.

“We are incredibly pleased to again be recognizing UAMS for its commitment to caring for patients with stroke,” said Steven Messe, M.D., chairperson of the Stroke System of Care Advisory Group. “Participation in Get With The Guidelines is associated with improved patient outcomes, fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates – a win for health care systems, families and communities.”

Earlier this year, Healthgrades, a leading resource that connects consumers, physicians and health systems, honored UAMS as a Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Stroke.

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

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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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