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UAMS Breaks Ground on Child Development Center

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) broke ground today on a nearly $10 million Child Development Center on a four-acre property in Little Rock.

The approximately 20,000-square-foot Child Development Center will be built at the intersection of 11th and Monroe streets, just south of the Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's Library and across Interstate 630 from the UAMS campus. The facility is expected to open in spring 2024.

The center will have the capacity to provide services for about 200 children, from infancy through prekindergarten, of UAMS employees and students. Of those, 10% of the slots will be reserved for the children of employees who live in the surrounding community, and another 10% will go to workers or students who qualify for Child Care and Development Fund vouchers through the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

The project will be financed through the federal New Markets Tax Credit program, with additional money coming from gifts from UAMS employees and supporters.

"When I joined UAMS, Dr. Stephanie Gardner and a dedicated team were already hard at work building support for this center," said Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. "It is because of their efforts that we are breaking ground on this much needed facility to benefit our employees and students."

"For the children and their families — who will include UAMS front-line clinicians, health professions educators, researchers and our staff — we will provide a safe, welcoming facility where their children can learn, thrive and have fun," said Stephanie Gardner, Ed.D., PharmD, UAMS provost and chief strategy officer.

Access to high-quality child care has long been identified as a need for UAMS employees. The project meets UAMS' strategic goals of being an employer of choice and offering programs that increase opportunities for success and improve the work-life balance of employees.

The center's design includes rooms for infant care, toddlers and preschool as well as indoor and outdoor play and activity areas. UAMS will contract with Bright Horizons,

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the nation's largest provider of employee-sponsored child care, to manage the center and offer a curriculum that covers subjects including language and literacy, creative arts, math operations and reasoning, science and technology, and health and wellness.

UAMS worked with the city of Little Rock to acquire the land for the Child Development Center. Other community partners include Southern Bancorp, U.S. Bank, the Central Arkansas Library System and the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance.

The project team consists of Fennell Purifoy Architects and C.R. Crawford Construction.

"We were proud partners with UAMS in locating this much-needed center in the 12th Street corridor," said Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. "The Child Development Center will be an anchor of the neighborhood while at the same time serving as an exceptional and positive learning environment that benefits children in the heart of our city.

"The city of Little Rock was delighted to do its part in the work leading to today's groundbreaking on an important project that serves as a significant example of the positive effects of targeted community development," Scott said.

The center is expected to create about 40 jobs for teachers, teacher assistants and other staff members, all with competitive salaries and benefits.

Other dignitaries at the groundbreaking included C.C. "Cliff" Gibson III, chairman of the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees; Jeannette "Jan" Shorey, professor emerita in the UAMS College of Medicine; Kathy Webb, Ward 3 Little Rock city director; state Rep. Tippi McCullough; Jay Chesshir, president and CEO of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce; Tom Fennell of Fennell Purifoy Architects; Phil Purifoy of Fennell Purifoy Architects; Justin Reeves, project superintendent of C.R. Crawford Construction; Darrin Williams, CEO of Southern Bancorp; Mike Richardson, Missouri and Arkansas branch banking market leader at U.S. Bank; Nate Coulter, executive director of the Central Arkansas Library System; and Shya Washington-Webb, branch manager for the Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's Library.

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. 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.

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Photos from the event as well as artist renderings of the facility will be available this afternoon to download at:
https://app.box.com/s/z1mep90bslm45tu6jf5oyhe0crfkxebz