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**UAMS College of Public Health Researchers to Use
\$4 Million Grant to Address Health Impact of Structural Racism,
Discrimination on Middle-Aged Black Men**

LITTLE ROCK — Researchers from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health’s Southern Public Health and Criminal Justice Research Center will use a \$4 million grant from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) to study structural racism and discrimination. Specifically, the researchers are examining the persistent racial wealth gap between Black and white men.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines structural racism and discrimination as “macro-level conditions (e.g. residential segregation and institutional policies) that limit opportunities, resources, power and well-being of individuals and populations based on race/ethnicity and other statuses.” The NIMHD is funding research that studies these complexities and acknowledges that “achieving health equity for all in the U.S. will require dismantling this country’s historical legacy of structural racism.”

Brooke EE Montgomery, Ph.D., MPH, George Pro, Ph.D., and Nick Zaller, Ph.D., received a NIMHD Research Project Grant (R01) to study the relationship between the racial income gap and racial disparities in chronic diseases in a sample of low-income Black men recruited from central Arkansas.

This form of structural racism and discrimination is of particular interest as it has multilevel implications that strengthen risk factors and weaken protective factors to the health of Black men, said Montgomery. Temporarily reducing the gap through the provision of income supplementation is an innovative strategy to address this historic source of oppression and promote the health of Black men, she added.

“There’s a lot of discussion about crime, violent acts and poverty, but we need to understand how to address the issues,” Zaller said. “We’ll conduct one of the first studies that will focus on the effects of universal basic income, guaranteed income and the health

of a specific demographic in the South. We're happy to have received the grant and the opportunity to do the study."

Black men ages 45 and older will be the focus of the research. The study will include some participants who previously have been incarcerated. Each participant will be interviewed and surveyed three times during the 12-month study. Some of the men will be randomly selected to receive a financial stipend, which is downloaded onto a card, to use through the duration of the study. They will also have to complete a weekly financial log of how they use the stipend.

"We'll study the health habits, commonalities and differences between the people who get the money and the ones who don't," Montgomery said.

The researchers will collaborate with long-standing community partners to carry out the project, which will be conducted exclusively in Pulaski County.

"By focusing on Pulaski County, we can use both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to thoroughly evaluate the importance of addressing the racial income gap and how it relates to health among men who are more likely to have a shared geographic and historical context. Our goal is to advance antiracist health research as well as to inform policies that promote health equity and dismantle structural racism and discrimination across multiple systems of oppression." Montgomery said. "Through this grant, we'll also learn how income effects secondary measures related to their mental and physical health and how the men function in society.

"Are they going start engaging more in their communities? Will they be happier? How will the funding effect what they do with their children and families? Those are some examples of the questions we'll look to answer through this research grant."

Zaller noted that "having limited finances can force people to put their health on the backburner, especially individuals who are coming out of the criminal justice system."

This grant is the first of its kind in Arkansas and the first NIH grant that will focus on rigorously testing ways to dismantle structural racism.

"We've received the opportunity to wed the Southern Public Health and Criminal Justice Research Center's mission with research as a means to learn how we can promote racial justice," Montgomery said. "I envision this as a tool for supporting numerous endeavors in the participants' life. We are here to help people. That's what this research, this grant is all about."

The R01 grant and the forthcoming research project are a means to provide well-documented numerical solutions to issues that lead to other problems.

"With the grant, we're going to find out if just being financial stability is enough for people to prioritize their health," Zaller said.

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

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

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