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**UAMS Partnership Receives Two Awards to Address
Suicide, Food Insecurity among Older Adults**

LITTLE ROCK — A University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) partnership involving the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Centers on Aging, College of Nursing and the Arkansas Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence has received a total of \$550,000 in awards for programs that address food insecurity and suicide among older adults.

The recipients are collaborating in an effort known as the Arkansas Nurse-Led Academic Community Partnership, with a goal of identifying high rates of risk for food insecurity, suicide, and social isolation in the state, particularly among marginalized older adults. The community partnership draws on support from the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation, UAMS AR ConnectNow, and the Area Agencies on Aging senior centers and Meals on Wheels.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) awarded the partnership a \$450,000 grant for a program that benefits older adults. Nurse leaders will train clinicians, students, and community volunteers making daily food deliveries or working in congregate settings to identify food insecurity and suicide risk and to lead older adults to resources for in-home or community assistance. The program also integrates technology to decrease social isolation and increase access to food and mental health services.

Melodee Harris, Ph.D., CNP, associate professor in the UAMS College of Nursing and co-director of the Arkansas Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence, Amy Leigh Overton-McCoy, Ph.D., APRN, assistant professor in the UAMS College of Medicine, director of the UAMS Centers on Aging and Murphy Endowed Chair for Rural Aging Leadership and Policy, lead the project. Overton-McCoy is the principal investigator (PI) on the project, with Harris serving as the co-PI.

“From a College of Nursing perspective, it is very important that students receive training in geropsychiatric nursing and suicide prevention in older adults, especially in homebound, rural

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adults who are often forgotten,” Harris said. “This grant will focus on mental health disparities and food insecurities for older adults who are socially isolated.”

The UAMS Centers on Aging, a program of the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, aims to improve health outcomes for older Arkansans through educational programs and clinical care. “The ACL funding will help us find innovative ways to address the challenges of suicide and food insecurity among some of our most vulnerable populations,” Overton-McCoy said.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has chosen the community partnership to receive a Promise Award, which is a \$100,000 cash award under its Mission Daybreak program. The Mission Daybreak program seeks innovative solutions to reduce the number of suicides among veterans. There were more than 1,370 national proposals for this award. This team was one of 40 proposals awarded nationally to address the alarming rise in suicide rates among veterans. Harris serves as the PI on this project with Overton-McCoy as the co-PI.

The Mission Daybreak award will allow the community partnership to customize its innovative food insecurity and suicide programs to meet the needs of veterans in rural areas.

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 3,240 students, 913 medical residents and fellows, and five 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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