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**UAMS Study Finds One in Four Adults
Have Experienced Loss Due to COVID-19**

FAYETTEVILLE — One in four U.S. adults has experienced the death of a family member or close friend due to COVID-19, according to a study led by researchers at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Office of Community Health & Research.

The study, [*COVID-19 Death Exposure Among Adults in the United States*](#), analyzed the responses of participants who self-reported the death of a loved one due to COVID-19. Other studies show that those who experienced loss due to COVID-19 have also suffered prolonged or complicated grief, and that those grieving the loss of a close relative or friend experience increased chances of physical health issues and higher rates of disability, medication use, hospitalization and depressive symptoms.

“People who have suffered loss during the pandemic may still be suffering,” said Don E. Willis, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Office of Community Health & Research. “The impact of the pandemic does not end at the point of death, but ripples out across social networks. Even if the last COVID-19 death were to occur tomorrow, the staggering loss of life from the pandemic will likely be impacting the lives and health of the bereaved for many years to come.”

UAMS researchers also found that minority populations — particularly Black individuals — experienced greater risk of death due to COVID-19, as did people 60 or older, married couples or people who had forgone treatment due to health care costs.

“This study showed that there have been major racial disparities in exposure to the loss of close friends or family due to COVID-19,” Willis said. “This is critical for understanding how the pandemic may shape health disparities moving forward because unequal death exposure is a contributor to racial health disparities.”

There have been more than 1 million deaths related to COVID-19 in the United States, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Nearly 12,700 Arkansans have died from the virus, according to the Arkansas Department of Health, which also reported that

72% of Arkansans who died of COVID-19 since February 2021 were not fully vaccinated against the coronavirus.

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved bivalent booster shots for both Pfizer and Moderna, which target new Omicron variants of the coronavirus. The Pfizer booster is authorized for ages 5 and up, and the Moderna booster is authorized for ages 6 and up.

The latest COVID booster is currently being offered at all UAMS Health primary care clinics and by the UAMS Office of Community Health & Research at mobile health events throughout the state. For more information or to view the schedule of upcoming mobile health events, visit nwa.uams.edu/covid.

The UAMS Northwest Regional Campus includes 307 medical, pharmacy, nursing and health professions students, 66 medical and pharmacy residents, two sports medicine fellows, and 1,000 community-based faculty. The campus has nine clinics including a student-led clinic, orthopaedics and sports medicine, and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Faculty conduct research to reduce health disparities.

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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