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**News Release**  
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**UAMS First in State to Earn The Joint Commission’s  
Gold Seal of Approval for Spinal Fusion Treatment**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS Health) is the first health organization in Arkansas to earn The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for Certification in Spinal Fusion. The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a health care organization’s commitment to providing safe and quality patient care.

The Joint Commission, founded in 1951, is an independent, not-for-profit organization that meticulously reviews and certifies disease-specific programs in the United States. It is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care.

The certification is awarded to health care organizations with protocols proven to deliver better outcomes within a practice specialty — in this case, spinal fusion. The complex surgery connects two or more bones in any part of the spine. It can help correct problems with the way the spine is formed, such as in scoliosis, or can be used to stabilize the spine in cases of severe arthritis or after a damaged disk is removed.

“Spinal fusion certification recognizes health care organizations committed to fostering continuous improvement in patient safety and quality of care,” said Deborah Ryan, M.S., RN, the commission’s interim executive vice president of accreditation and certification operations. “We commend UAMS for using certification to reduce variation in its clinical processes and to strengthen its program structure and management framework for spinal fusion patients.”

“Achieving this certification is a reflection of UAMS Health’s commitment to provide the highest quality of care and safety every day for patients with spine disorders,” said Michelle Krause, M.D., MPH, senior vice chancellor for UAMS Health and CEO for UAMS Medical Center.

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A team of reviewers from The Joint Commission performed a rigorous, unannounced on-site review of the UAMS spinal fusion program July 31. The review included on-site observations and interviews.

For more information, visit The Joint Commission website at <https://www.jointcommission.org/>

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

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