



ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S • BAPTIST HEALTH
UAMS HEALTH • PROTON INTERNATIONAL



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**UAMS, Arkansas Children's, Baptist Health and
Proton International Open State's First Proton Center**

LITTLE ROCK — [The Proton Center of Arkansas](#) opened today at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), becoming the first proton therapy center in Arkansas and only the 43rd in the nation to provide the most advanced cancer radiation treatment in the world.

Proton therapy is a cutting-edge form of radiation that uses positively charged proton particles to destroy tumors, often in hard-to-reach areas, with greater precision and significantly less damage to healthy organs and tissues. Patients receiving proton therapy have less severe and fewer side effects than conventional X-ray radiation, which improves their recovery time and quality of life.

“What started more than three years ago with a shared vision to bring the most advanced cancer therapy to Arkansas is finally here,” said UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA. “It’s a proud day for UAMS and for health care in Arkansas as we join a small, elite group of states that offer this groundbreaking therapy for children and adults with cancer.”

Recognizing the burden on patients forced to travel out of state for the sought after therapy, UAMS joined with Arkansas Children's, Baptist Health and Proton International to build the Proton Center.

“From opening the UAMS Baptist Health Cancer Clinic and Infusion Center to Arkansas’ first proton center, this is another example of how strategic collaboration with other leading health care providers can improve the health of Arkansans,” said Troy

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Wells, president and CEO of Baptist Health. "Baptist Health is thrilled to help bring this therapy to our state knowing that patients are going to be able to receive the best cancer care right here in Arkansas."

"Proton International is focused on a singular mission — to bring proton therapy to more people who can benefit from it," said Chris Chandler, director of Proton International. "The fact that we can now make this available to the residents of Arkansas and the surrounding areas is a mission fulfilled."

Proton therapy is used to treat a wide range of cancers in both children and adults, including brain, spine, breast, esophageal, head and neck, liver, lung, lymphomas, eye, pancreatic and sarcomas.

Proton therapy is the preferred treatment for children who face risks from unnecessary radiation exposure that adults do not, such as developmental delays, hormone deficiencies, effects on bone growth, and potential long-term effects of secondary cancers in exposed tissues.

"This is an exciting day for advancing child health in Arkansas," said Marcy Doderer, FACHE, president and CEO of Arkansas Children's. "Through this partnership, the children we serve will now have access to this specialized treatment close to home."

UAMS is the only provider of radiation therapy for children in Arkansas.

The Proton Center is part of the new \$65 million UAMS Radiation Oncology Center, which opened in July at 3900 W. Capitol Ave. in Little Rock in a building adjacent to the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. The Proton Center occupies 9,000 square feet on the second floor of the three-story center and includes the proton treatment room, a CT room to prepare patients for proton therapy, a high-dose radiation room, gowning rooms, recovery rooms, an anesthesia room, eight exam rooms, a large family area for pediatric patients, and a physician work room.

UAMS broke ground on the 58,000-square-foot Radiation Oncology Center in May 2021, primarily to accommodate the proton center. The 55-ton cyclotron, a type of particle accelerator that powers the proton beam, made a cross-country journey by land and sea to Little Rock. Starting in Belgium, the massive equipment that included the 75-ton gantry, traveled by sea for five weeks, then by police escort on six semi-tractor trailers from the Port of Houston to Little Rock.

The proton treatment room features a unique ambient experience that allows patients to choose a room theme and color that is digitally displayed on the walls and ceiling. This is especially helpful in reducing anxiety in children during treatment.

The center expects to begin treating patients with proton therapy this month and is equipped to deliver the therapy to as many as 40 patients per day. Proton treatments typically take 30 minutes.

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The Proton Center is currently scheduling patient evaluations and consultations with referring physicians. Call 1-501-664-4568 for an appointment.

About Arkansas Children's

Arkansas Children's is the only healthcare system in the state solely dedicated to caring for Arkansas' more than 700,000 children. The private, non-profit organization includes two pediatric hospitals, a pediatric research institute and USDA nutrition center, a philanthropic foundation, a nursery alliance, statewide clinics, and many education and outreach programs — all focused on fulfilling a promise to define and deliver unprecedented child health. Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) is a 336-bed, Magnet-recognized facility in Little Rock operating the state's only Level I pediatric trauma center; the state's only burn center; the state's only Level IV neonatal intensive care unit; the state's only pediatric intensive care unit; the state's only pediatric surgery program with Level I verification from the American College of Surgeons (ACS); the state's only magnetoencephalography (MEG) system for neurosurgical planning and cutting-edge research; and the state's only nationally recognized pediatric transport program. Arkansas Children's is nationally ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* in seven pediatric subspecialties (2023—2024): Cancer, Cardiology & Heart Surgery, Diabetes & Endocrinology, Nephrology, Orthopedics, Pulmonology and Urology. Arkansas Children's Northwest (ACNW), the first and only pediatric hospital in the Northwest Arkansas region, is a level IV pediatric trauma center. ACNW operates a 24-bed inpatient unit; a surgical unit with five operating rooms; outpatient clinics offering over 20 subspecialties; diagnostic services; imaging capabilities; occupational therapy services; and Northwest Arkansas' only pediatric emergency department, equipped with 30 exam rooms. Generous philanthropic and volunteer engagement has sustained Arkansas Children's since it began as an orphanage in 1912, and today ensures the system can deliver on its promise of unprecedented child health. To learn more, visit archildren.org.

About Baptist Health

For more than a century, Baptist Health has delivered All Our Best in health care through Christian compassion and innovative services. Baptist Health is Arkansas' most comprehensive health care organization with more than 250 points of access that include 11 hospitals; urgent care centers; a senior living community; over 100 primary and specialty care clinics; a college with studies in nursing and allied health; and a graduate residency program. It is also the largest private not-for-profit health care organization based in Arkansas, providing care through the support of approximately 11,000 employees, groundbreaking treatments, renowned physicians and community outreach programs. For more information about Baptist Health, visit Baptist-Health.com, call Baptist Health HealthLine at 1-888-BAPTIST or download the [myBaptistHealth app](http://myBaptistHealth.app).

About Proton International

Proton International has an experienced team dedicated to bringing proton therapy to patients. The company works with hospitals and physician groups to develop one- and two-room proton therapy facilities on a turnkey basis. The PI team has developed and operated multiple centers and is currently active on several projects. PI's business model ensures that projects are completed within the scope and needs of the institution and the patients we serve. Services include business planning, organizational structure, financing, building design and construction, installation and commissioning, equipment, staff training, and more. To learn more, visit protonintl.com


About UAMS

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 I 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

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Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit uams.edu or uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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Photos from the Grand Opening will be available to download this afternoon [here](#).