

UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 West Markham # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

uamshealth.com/news



News Release
Oct. 23, 2023

Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354
yavonda@uams.edu

**UAMS Awarded \$3.25 Million Federal Grant for Creation
of Health Career Program in Delta, South Arkansas**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) received a five-year, \$3.25 million federal grant to support the creation of a program that will help students from 20 underserved counties in the Arkansas Delta and southern part of the state pursue careers in health care.

The Arkansas Delta Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) Academy will recruit and assist students from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds as they enter the educational pipeline, complete health professions programs and enter the health career workforce in their communities. Academy programs will serve high school juniors and seniors, undergraduate students, and adult and nontraditional learners.

The federal grant was awarded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Arkansas is among the least healthy states in the nation, ranking 48th in a 2022 report by the United Health Foundation, a not-for-profit organization established by the UnitedHealth Group. This problem is more pronounced in the Arkansas Delta, where residents are disproportionately affected by medical conditions such as heart disease, cancer, strokes, obesity, diabetes and hypertension.

Chronic and pervasive gaps in the health care workforce are a significant factor, said Brian Gittens, Ed.D., MPA, vice chancellor of the UAMS Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

“Students in the Delta face numerous academic and socioeconomic challenges that serve as barriers to their success,” he said. “We want to break down these barriers and create the opportunity to fill areas of need in the health care field.”

UAMS Awarded \$3.25 Million Federal Grant for Creation of Health Career Program in Delta, South Arkansas

Page 2

Academy programs will focus on expanding the workforce in a variety of health care disciplines, including sonography, dietetics, health administration, medical lab technology, mental and behavioral health, occupational and physical therapy, physician assistant studies, public health, radiography, and respiratory therapy.

“UAMS is excited to establish the HCOP Academy, which represents another step in our mission to provide equitable health care to all Arkansans,” said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, the chancellor of UAMS and CEO of UAMS Health.





The HCOP Academy will be led by the UAMS Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in collaboration with UAMS Regional Campuses. Other partners in the project include the UAMS College of Health Professions; the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health; the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership, a consortium of community-based rural hospitals; and high schools, colleges and universities in the 20 counties.

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) is among the partner institutions. UAPB Chancellor Laurence B. Alexander, J.D., Ph.D., noted the program’s importance for aspiring health professionals.

“Our partnership with UAMS for the HCOP Academy provides a great pathway for students from the Arkansas Delta to prepare for health care careers and join the medical workforce without leaving their home region,” he said.

The program will serve the following counties: Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Cleveland, Columbia, Crittenden, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Jefferson, Lee, Lincoln, Monroe, Ouachita, Phillips, Sevier, St. Francis and Union.

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 3,275 students, 890 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 12,000 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](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

Like us, we're social:    

###