



News Release
Dec. 6, 2023

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Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas Opens UAMS Milk Bank Depot in Rogers

LITTLE ROCK — Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas, in support of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Milk Bank, has opened a milk depot in its Rogers hospital.

The Mercy NWA Milk Depot is a designated space for women to donate milk, which will be sent to the UAMS Milk Bank for screening, pasteurization and nutritional analysis. After processing, milk will be sent to hospitals throughout Arkansas.

“I’ve witnessed firsthand the impact that proper nutrition can have on the health of both mothers and newborns,” said Hannah McHardy, RN, prenatal nurse navigator with Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas. “Establishing the first UAMS Milk Bank donation point in our region at Mercy is an important step toward ensuring sick and vulnerable infants in our community receive the best possible start in life. This initiative addresses a critical need for donor breast milk and aligns with our work to improve outcomes for babies, reduce the maternal mortality rate and support the well-being of families in Northwest Arkansas.”

Located just off UAMS’ main campus in Little Rock, the UAMS Milk Bank focuses on the health of mothers and newborns in Arkansas through encouragement and support of breastfeeding. The first facility of its kind in Arkansas, the milk bank helps ensure a ready supply of donor milk for sick and vulnerable infants in neonatal intensive care units (NICU) around the state, shortening the time it takes for regional hospitals to receive critical milk supplies and improving outcomes for babies.

“We are very excited to have a new drop off location in Northwest Arkansas to make access to the Milk Bank easier for our generous milk donors,” said Misty L. Virmani, M.D., executive medical director of the UAMS Milk Bank, associate professor of pediatrics and neonatology and director of breastfeeding medicine at UAMS. “The

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connections we are building will help strengthen networks of support for breastfeeding women around our state and help keep Arkansas' mothers' milk going to help sick babies in the state's NICUs."

Previously, Arkansas hospitals relied on donor milk purchased from milk banks in Texas, Michigan, Illinois and Oklahoma, costing more than \$1 million a year. In 2021, the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 225 establishing the creation of the milk bank and a special fund to help support the bank.

The Mercy NWA Milk Depot is in Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas' Women's & Children's Unit, located at 2710 S. Rife Medical Lane in Rogers. Donations can only be made by appointment. For more information or to schedule a drop off, please call (479) 338-2072.

For information about how to donate milk to the UAMS Milk Bank, please visit uamshealth.com/uams-milk-bank. To contact the Milk Bank, please call 501-686-5355 or email milkbank@uams.edu.

Mercy, one of the 20 largest U.S. health systems and named the top large system in the U.S. for excellent patient experience by NRC Health, serves millions annually with nationally recognized quality care and one of the nation's largest Accountable Care Organizations. Mercy is a highly integrated, multi-state health care system including more than 40 acute care, managed and specialty (heart, children's, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, convenient and urgent care locations, imaging centers and pharmacies. Mercy has 900 physician practices and outpatient facilities, more than 4,000 physicians and advanced practitioners and more than 45,000 co-workers serving patients and families across Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Mercy also has clinics, outpatient services and outreach ministries in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

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](#).

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