

UAMS News Bureau

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**Blue & You Foundation Awards UAMS
\$199,000 Grant for Maternal Depression Program**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) received a \$199,000 grant from the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas to support the Family Medicine Parent Partnership, a program of the UAMS Department of Family and Preventive Medicine.

It is the second grant from the Blue & You Foundation supporting the program.

“Maternal depression is a universal public health problem,” said Shashank Kraleti, M.D., chair of the UAMS Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, noting that an estimated one in 10 children are raised by a mother with depression, with rates considerably higher in at-risk populations. “With this additional grant, we can expand our capacity to address issues of maternal depression and educate people on the condition’s effects.”

The Family Medicine Parent Partnership supports mothers and their children by addressing the effects of maternal depression on child health and development by leveraging UAMS’ primary care clinic protocols for depression in patients, pairing it with an innovative parenting intervention. Through this support structure, the program helps increase parenting behaviors known to support healthy child development, such as reading to children, maintaining daily routines and using positive discipline.

“We are incredibly thankful for the Blue & You Foundation’s continued help in supporting this critical work,” said Nikki Edge, Ph.D., vice chair for research in the UAMS Department of Family and Preventive Medicine. “With this funding, we will build on our current first-year pilot by supporting mothers and mitigating effects of maternal depression on child health and development.”

Building on the work supported by the first Blue & You Foundation grant, funds will be used to pilot, refine and evaluate approaches while pairing parenting intervention with the standard primary care protocols. Funds will also be used to promote medical education on maternal depression, support staffing, create intervention materials and purchase software used for digital intervention. The additional funding will also allow

for the implementation of the program at two UAMS Regional Campuses in the state, expanding services to more diverse rural populations.

“There are many parts of Arkansas where it can be difficult if not impossible to find a behavioral health practitioner. This program will bridge that gap to provide much needed care,” said Blue & You Foundation President Rebecca Pittillo. “Raising healthy babies begins with having healthy moms. Maternal depression is a real illness that can interfere with not only the building those special bonds but impact the care and development of their children.”

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 eight 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, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community 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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