

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release**  
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**30+ Year Leukemia Survivor to Share Story  
at UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute April 17**

LITTLE ROCK — Mel Mann, a retired U.S. Army major and 32-year chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) survivor, will speak to cancer patients, caregivers and health care providers at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute grand rounds on Wednesday, April 17.

The free event will be held at noon in the Walton Auditorium on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Cancer Institute. No registration is required.

Diagnosed with CML, a rare cancer of the white blood cells, in 1995, Mann was given three years to live. Unable to find a bone marrow donor, he was only the second person out of thousands to participate in the landmark 1998 Phase 1 clinical trial of the life-saving drug, Gleevec.

Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in May 2001, Gleevec is now a standard treatment for CML and widely considered one of the most successful cancer treatments with an 89% overall survival rate. Before Gleevec, only 30% of patients with CML survived five years after being diagnosed.

Gleevec is the first tyrosine kinase inhibitor approved by the FDA and is also referred to by its chemical name, imatinib.

Mann's cancer remains in remission, and he still takes the same medicine today. He travels the U.S. sharing his story, spreading cancer awareness and advocating for clinical trials, particularly among African Americans, a group that continues to be underrepresented in clinical trials.

"I am Exhibit A of why patients should consider clinical trials," he said. "I saw clinical trials as a chance to get tomorrow's medicine today."

Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, says bringing Mann to Arkansas to share his story is important as the Cancer Institute expands the number of interventional treatment trials it can offer to cancer patients.

“We have the only academic Phase 1 Clinical Trial Unit in Arkansas and are actively testing many novel treatments that are helping patients who have failed standard treatments,” said Birrer.

Patients who want to learn more should email [cancerclinicaltrials@uams.edu](mailto:cancerclinicaltrials@uams.edu) or call the UAMS Cancer Clinical Trials Office at 501-686-8288.

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

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