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**UAMS 12th Street Health & Wellness Center
Receives Gold Star Rating**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) 12th Street Health & Wellness Center, a student-run, interprofessional free clinic that serves its neighbors while educating students, has again earned a Gold Star rating from the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NAFC).

The rating is the highest awarded by the NAFC, whose mission is to ensure that the medically underserved have access to affordable, quality health care.

Located at 4010 W. 12th St. in Little Rock, the clinic has been providing services from students in all five UAMS colleges — Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Public Health — and the Graduate School, since its opening in early 2013.

Under the supervision of licensed health care professionals, the students provide health and wellness services, including disease and medication management, basic dental screenings, health screenings, education and immunizations for the community. The clinic focuses on preventative care and can write prescriptions for some chronic medical conditions.

It earned a Silver Star rating in 2020, the inaugural year of the NAFC's ratings system. It has received a Gold Star rating every year since then. The NAFC Standards Program awards gold, silver and bronze ratings.

“It takes a huge amount of work to reach and maintain a Gold Star rating,” said Elizabeth Gath, M.D., a professor in the UAMS College of Medicine Department of Internal Medicine who serves as the clinic's medical director.

To achieve a Gold Star rating, a free or charitable clinic must receive high scores in areas related to patient care, clinic and pharmacy responsibilities, administrative duties, credentialing and privileging systems, as well as risk management systems. The clinic

had to submit information on its written policies and procedures to the NAFC, and then show that it successfully incorporated those standards.

“These standards allow us to showcase the quality care provided to our patients to policymakers, partners, funders and stakeholders,” the association said in a letter notifying UAMS of its rating. “Additionally, the standards assist the NAFC in developing benefits and resources that will help our members enhance the care you provide to patients.”

There are about 1,400 free or charitable clinics across the United States that are registered with the NAFC. Gath noted that only 6% of NAFC-registered clinics are student led.

“The 12th Street Health & Wellness Center is unique in this award,” she said. “We are proud of our Student Board of Directors and Leadership Committee who work diligently to provide quality care to our patients. We also cooperate with our Community Advisory Board regularly to ensure that what we do is respectful of the community’s needs.”

“The mission of the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics is to ensure that the medically underserved have access to affordable health care,” it says. “The NAFC and its members are dedicated to ensuring that patients receive quality health care.”

The 12th Street Health & Wellness Center had more than 1,000 unique patient encounters in 2023, Gath said, which allowed patients to avoid unnecessary emergency visits and relieved anguish over health concerns.

According to recent statistics, about 2 million patients receive care at free and charitable clinics and pharmacies throughout the United States. About 82% of the patients are uninsured and about 63% of them are employed. There were 682,000 new patients seen at the clinics in the last year. Gath said these statistics are “consistent with what we see at 12th Street. Most of our patients are workers in construction, landscaping, the food industry and hospitality who do not have access to medical insurance through their jobs.” Another large group are those who “fall through the cracks of Medicaid.”

“The 12th Street Health & Wellness Center is a value to our students who learn interprofessionalism and how to care for patients with guidance,” Gath said. “It’s a value to our faculty, who provide educational and administrative support. Mostly, it is a value to the community, caring for those who have no other access to health care. We believe that health care is a right, not just a privilege.”

In short, she said, “the 12th Street Health & Wellness Center helps keep our community healthier and hopeful.”

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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