



News Release
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**UAMS Milk Bank Sends First Shipment to NWA,
Makes Delivery to Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas' NICU**

LITTLE ROCK —The neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas in Rogers has received its first delivery of donated breast milk from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Milk Bank.

It is also the first delivery from the UAMS Milk Bank to Northwest Arkansas.

“We are thrilled to celebrate this milestone of receiving our first batch of donated milk from the UAMS Milk Bank here in Northwest Arkansas,” said Hannah McHardy, perinatal nurse navigator at Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas. “The Mercy Milk Depot has been an incredible success, collecting more than 30,000 ounces of milk since opening nearly a year ago. It’s heartwarming to see the generosity of our local mothers come full circle, as their donations now directly benefit babies in our community.”

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.

“The UAMS Milk Bank is excited to send milk for the first time to Northwest Arkansas, an area of the state that is such a wonderful supporter of breastfeeding families,” 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.

Last year, Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas opened the Mercy NWA Milk Depot — a designated space in the hospital for women to donate milk, which is sent to the UAMS

Milk Bank for screening, pasteurization and nutritional analysis. After processing, the milk is sent to hospitals around the state.

“The Mercy NWA Milk Depot has been a huge supporter of the UAMS Milk Bank, sending milk from many mothers who are so generously sharing their extra milk with vulnerable newborns,” said Virmani. “Donating milk is an effort of love from the women who send their milk to us, they are creating bonds and supporting their community and the state through milk donation. We are so proud to be a partner in these efforts with Northwest Arkansas.”

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.

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.

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.

About Mercy — 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 50 acute care and specialty (heart, children’s, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, convenient and urgent care locations, imaging centers and pharmacies. Mercy has over 900 physician practice locations and outpatient facilities, more than 4,500 physicians and advanced practitioners and more than 50,000 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. In fiscal year 2023 alone, Mercy provided more than half a billion dollars of free care and other community benefits, including traditional charity care and unreimbursed Medicaid.

About UAMS — 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](#).