

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS to Train 75 Community Health Workers
with Support from Arkansas Office of Skills Development**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Institute for Community Health Innovation will work with partners to continue building the community health worker (CHW) workforce across the state after receiving \$375,000 in support from the Arkansas Office of Skills Development Training Grant Program.

The Office of Skills Development (OSD), an office within the division of Arkansas Workforce Connections in the Department of Commerce, strategically invests in all levels of the Arkansas workforce by raising education and skill levels, meeting the needs of companies operating in Arkansas, and balancing workforce and employer interests, leading to greater economic achievement for workers and companies.

The support from OSD will be used to train 75 community health workers over the next 18 months, focusing on rural counties throughout Arkansas. Earlier this year, Arkansas lawmakers established the Community Health Worker Act, formally establishing the role of CHWs and paving the way for CHWs to receive compensation for services from the Arkansas Medicaid Program or a health benefit plan.

“We’ve seen the incredible impact community health workers can have on communities across Arkansas — especially those in rural areas where people may face more challenges accessing health care,” said Rosalinda Medrano, assistant director of community programs at the institute. “We’re excited to extend this work to more areas across Arkansas as we work with the Office of Skills Development to create a better state of health for all.”

The institute developed the first CHW apprentice program in the United States, reducing the training time by half from two years to one. In partnership with the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association, the institute has trained more than 430 CHWs since 2022.

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“The support from OSD, along with the support of our incredible partners, will help us create career opportunities and establish new, innovative pathways to health for communities across Arkansas,” said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., division director of the institute.

To supplement its CHW training program, the institute will work with partners to launch a perinatal CHW certification to focus on the specific needs of pregnant and postpartum moms.

In addition to its partnership with the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association, the institute will work with the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Doula Alliance of Arkansas, Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network, the Arkansas Hospital Association, Ujima Maternity Network, UAMS Regional Campuses and more as it trains CHWs across the state.

To learn more about the institute and its training programs, visit communityhealth.uams.edu.

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 3,553 students and 902 medical residents and fellows. It is the state’s largest public employer with about 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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