

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**UAMS Offering Scholarships  
for Perinatal Mental Health Certification**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Institute for Community Health Innovation is offering a limited number of scholarships to maternal health care workers seeking to become certified in perinatal mental health.

The scholarships are open to qualified applicants with two years of experience working with moms or babies in a health- or community-related setting. Eligible candidates include mental health therapists, doulas, nurses, community health workers, physicians, lactation consultants, or other health care service workers.

“Strengthening perinatal mental health care is a critical step toward improving outcomes for mothers and their families,” said Hannah McHardy, senior director at the Institute for Community Health Innovation. “These scholarships recognize and support community leaders who are committed to advancing health where it matters most.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), perinatal mental health conditions — such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) — are the leading cause of maternal mortality in the United States, responsible for nearly 1 in 4 pregnancy-related deaths. Arkansas, which has one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the nation, was recently given a D rating for perinatal mental health by the Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health.

“Investing in perinatal mental health is an investment in mothers and families across Arkansas,” said UAMS psychiatrist Erin Jefferson, M.D. “As women navigate the physical changes and challenges of pregnancy and postpartum recovery, their mental and emotional well-being deserves equal attention. This is especially important because maternal mental health conditions are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, as well as a leading cause of maternal mortality. By prioritizing both physical and mental health, we can ensure mothers are supported, strengthened, and empowered during one of the most important seasons of their lives.”

Selected participants will receive funding to complete Postpartum Support International (PSI) training and sit for the exam to become a Certified Perinatal Mental Health Professional (PMH-C). Training is available online through PSI, and recipients will be required to complete the program within 12 months. To apply for a scholarship, visit [redcap.link/PMHC](https://redcap.link/PMHC).

The scholarships are part of the institute's ongoing effort to improve health in communities across Arkansas. The institute also recently announced plans to train 25 doulas and 75 community health workers across the state. To learn more, visit [communityhealth.uams.edu](https://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 1,015 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](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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