

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS, ACH Present School-Based
Mental Health Symposium on July 29-30**

LITTLE ROCK — The 2026 School-Based Mental Health Symposium will be presented July 29 and 30 by the Arkansas Mental Health Access for Pediatric Primary Care, a program developed by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) to improve mental health access for children in Arkansas.

The symposium, which is free of charge, is for school personnel, including administrators, teachers, counselors, principals, school nurses, intervention specialists, and support staff. There will be two distinct learning tracks designed to meet the needs of both healthcare providers and school-based professionals.

This year’s theme will be “Neurodivergence: From Insight to Implementation — Clinical and School-Based Strategies for Supporting Autism and Developmental Differences,” with speakers from across the nation covering topics that include practical classroom strategies, behavior support and de-escalation techniques, and inclusive instruction and accommodations.

The symposium will begin at 9:30 a.m. on July 29 at the Embassy Suites in Little Rock, with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m.

A virtual training session on “Creating a Neurodiversity-Affirming School,” led by Emily Kircher-Morris, LPC, an author and host of The Neurodiversity Podcast, will be held July 30. Kircher-Morris is a mental health counselor in St. Louis.

Registration is required for the symposium, which is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and is now in its third year. To register for either or both sessions, visit: redcap.link/ARMAPP2026Symposium. Financial assistance may be available to help offset the cost of gas to Little Rock.

“The number of students identified with autism and other developmental differences continues to grow, and schools are navigating increasingly complex behavioral, academic, and social-emotional needs,” said Valandra German, DrPH, MPH, program manager for the Arkansas Mental Health Access for Pediatric Primary Care. “Both healthcare providers and educators are eager for practical tools, not just theory, that can be implemented immediately.”

German said the symposium is designed to bridge the gap and equip professionals with actionable strategies that translate insight into implementation and create more inclusive, supportive learning and health care environments.

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 seven 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, 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 or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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