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News Release

Aug. 4, 2026

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**UAMS to Provide Training to Assist Providers
Who Work with Adolescents with Substance Use Disorders**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' (UAMS) Psychiatric Research Institute recently launched a new statewide initiative to expand Arkansas' capacity to provide evidence-based substance use disorder (SUD) treatment for adolescents.

Funded by the federal State Opioid Response (SOR) grant administered by the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, the Six Bridges Adolescent Substance Use Program is a training initiative designed to ensure that providers across the state have the specialized skills needed to care for young people and their families.

"According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, approximately one in four Americans reported using illicit drugs in 2024. Arkansas is experiencing an alarming trend of substance initiation among young children as early as age 12," said Srinivasa Gokarakonda, M.D., who is leading the project. "This grant will help us train more staff and expand capacity for conducting screenings and providing interventions across Arkansas."

The training sessions, to be offered free of charge both online and in person, were created for health professionals that work with adolescents, including primary care providers, nurses, therapists, school counselors, and educators.

Along with the training offerings, which focus on improving treatment outcomes, the program is also developing a library of online modules covering motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and relapse prevention so providers statewide can build skills on their own schedule.

"Many providers across Arkansas are already seeing young people struggling with substance use but tell us they don't feel equipped to help," said Laura Dunn, M.D., director of the Psychiatric Research Institute and chair of the UAMS Department of

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Psychiatry. “By bringing the best evidence-based training directly to providers, we can close that gap and make sure no family has to navigate adolescent recovery alone.”

For more information about the Six Bridges Adolescent Substance Use Program, visit psychiatry.uams.edu/adolescent-sud-training/.

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 1,030 medical residents and fellows, and two dental residents. 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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