

UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 W. Markham St. # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

news.uams.edu



**News Release
Sept. 10, 2026**

Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354
yavonda@uams.edu

**Blue & You Foundation Grant Funds
UAMS and Our House Shelter Pilot Program**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) received a \$224,340 grant from the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas to fund the Medical Respite for the Unhoused pilot program.

The two-year pilot medical respite program operates through a collaboration between UAMS and Our House Shelter, located at 302 E. Roosevelt Road, in Little Rock.

“The Blue & You Foundation invests in solutions that address the real-life barriers Arkansans face in achieving better health,” said Rebecca Pittillo, president of the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas. “This pilot reflects the kind of practical, community-centered approach that can help people recover safely, regain stability and move toward healthier futures.”

The pilot program will be the first shelter-embedded medical respite model, integrating clinical care into a community-based recovery setting, in central Arkansas.

“Patients experiencing homelessness often remain hospitalized after they are medically stable because they lack a safe place to recover, which can be costly for the hospital, reduces inpatient capacity, and can lead to poorer patient outcomes,” said UAMS Chancellor C. Lowry Barnes, M.D. “Through the Blue & You Foundation grant, this pilot program between UAMS and Our House will provide medically supported recovery beds for unhoused patients discharged from the hospital, reducing length of stay, preventing readmissions, improving recovery, and connecting patients to employment, benefits, and stable housing as a pathway to long-term health and economic stability.”

Funds will be used exclusively for staffing, direct services, and essential clinical supplies needed to deliver safe recovery care outside the hospital. This will include:

- UAMS clinical staff including a part-time UAMS social worker and care transition specialist

--NEXT--

- Medical supplies and durable clinical equipment
- UAMS' program coordination, evaluation, and outcomes measurement
- Our House case management, daily support staff, and employment and housing navigation services
- Support Services to ensure access to medical and housing appointments

“Housing instability is a foundational driver of poor health, and without targeted interventions, clinical care alone cannot produce sustainable improvement,” said Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D., UAMS provost and chief strategy officer. “Because of funding from the Blue & You Foundation, the medical respite pilot program will create a scalable model that integrates healthcare and social services, reduces unnecessary hospital utilization, and improves recovery for people experiencing homelessness.”

The Blue & You Foundation was established in 2001 through an initial gift from Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Since its inception, the Foundation's financial base has grown through wise and prudent investment strategies. This has enabled the foundation to support its mission by making grants funded by the interest earned on those investments.

Since 1987, Our House has provided a pathway out of homelessness for families and individuals in central Arkansas, empowering homeless and near-homeless families and individuals to succeed in the workforce, in school, and in life through hard work, wise decision-making, and active participation in the community. Over the past four decades, the contributions of thousands of dedicated people from all parts of the community have built Our House into a program that is having a lasting impact on hundreds of lives each year.

“Healthcare challenges play a huge role in miring people in homelessness, and improving access to quality healthcare is a top priority for Our House,” said Ben Goodwin, Our House's executive director. “We are very excited to partner with UAMS to develop a new and innovative model for aligning healthcare, housing, and other supports to empower people in our community to get from a place of extreme vulnerability to a place of stability.”

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](#).

Like us, we're social:

