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**UAMS Conference Introduces College Students
to World of Behavioral Health Careers**

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas has a significant shortage of mental health providers relative to its population's needs, with nearly every county in the state designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration as a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area.

To help combat this shortage, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Psychiatric Research Institute is holding a free conference Oct. 24 aimed at introducing college students to the world of behavioral health careers.

"Learn, Connect, Serve: Cultivating Arkansas' Next Generation of Behavioral Health Leaders" will be held from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the I. Dodd Wilson Education Building at UAMS. Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided at no cost. The conference was made possible by a UAMS Chancellor's Circle Grant.

"Arkansas needs more behavioral health providers, and the best way to build that pipeline is to show students early how many paths there are into this field, and how much impact they can have," said Laura Dunn, M.D., chair of the UAMS Department of Psychiatry and director of the Psychiatric Research Institute. "We also wanted this day to be fun, not just informative, because when students enjoy learning about these careers, they're more likely to see themselves in them. We are grateful for this opportunity to provide the conference, thanks to the support of the Chancellor's Circle Grant."

The day will open with an academic and career fair connecting students with colleges, employers, and community organizations, followed by interactive workshops covering career pathways in counseling and social work, psychiatry, psychology and neuropsychology, behavioral health research, and public health and policy.

Attendees will also witness a live clinical treatment team demonstration, offering an inside look at how behavioral health professionals collaborate on client care. Afternoon workshops will cover graduate and medical school preparation, professional

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communication, and crisis communication. The conference will conclude with an ice cream networking and research poster event.

“This conference is about meeting students where they are,” said Isis Pettway, LPC, who organized the conference. “Whether they have a clear career goal or are still exploring their options, ‘Learn, Connect, Serve’ is designed to reduce pressure, build confidence, and show students that there are many meaningful paths forward.”

To apply to attend the “Learn, Connect, Serve” conference, visit psychiatry.uams.edu/learn-connect-serve/.

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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