



# PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY *News*

March 2020

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When you think professional, ethical, quality healthcare,  
think physicians of Pulaski County Medical Society.

## COVID-19

By Jennifer Dillaha, MD

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause disease in both humans and animals. There are four common coronaviruses that infect humans; they cause relatively mild disease and are frequent causes of the common cold. However, in recent years other coronaviruses have emerged that cause SARS (Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) leading to multinational epidemics of severe disease. Both of these viruses are thought to have "made the jump" from an animal species to humans and were later shown to have human-to-human spread. A similar pattern is suspected in the current epidemic of the 2019 novel coronavirus.



Jennifer Dillaha, MD

The current outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) began in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. As of February 25, 2020, there are over 79,000 confirmed cases and 2,628 deaths. The number of cases is increasing rapidly and spreading to countries around the globe. There are now over 2,500 confirmed cases, including 35 deaths, in 35 countries outside of China. Over the last few days, sustained community transmission of COVID-19 has been seen South Korea, causing CDC to also issue a Level 3 Travel Alert for South Korea, which is in addition to the Level 3 Travel Alert already in place for China --advising travelers to avoid all nonessential travel to those countries. Also, multiple instances of community spread have been found in Iran, Italy, Japan, and Hong Kong, which now have lower level travel alerts. The situation is evolving rapidly, and additional travel alerts are likely.

*Continued on page 3*



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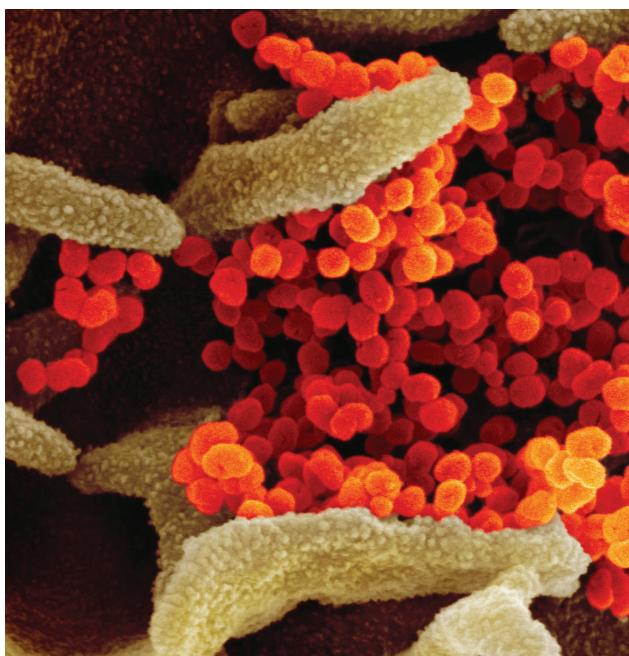


## COVID-19

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In the U.S., 14 cases have been diagnosed (12 among travelers to Hubei Province, 2 among close contact caretakers of confirmed cases). There have also been 39 cases among those who have been repatriated and quarantined by the US State Department (36 of these were on the Diamond Princess Cruise ship). CDC states that current risk to those in U.S. is low but advises that community spread of the virus causing COVID-19 within the U.S. is likely to occur at some point. The WHO recently stated that the risk of this virus causing a global pandemic is high. To date there have been no confirmed cases in Arkansas, and there are currently no Patients Under Investigation (PUI) in Arkansas. We are routinely monitoring those who have recently traveled from China and other countries on a case-by-case basis while they remain under home-quarantine for 14 days from the date of their departure. It is likely that travel from other countries will be added.

There has been confusion, in the general public and even in the medical community between the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 and the known human coronaviruses that also cause respiratory disease. Specifically, confusion has been caused by available respiratory virus panels that include "coronavirus" in the panel of viruses it identifies. The coronavirus in these panels represents the four previously identified strains of human coronavirus. At present, all testing for the virus causing COVID-19 is a real time RT-PCR test performed at CDC or, in the near future, at the state Public Health Laboratory. If you are told that a patient has been exposed to someone "with coronavirus", please investigate which test was done and if the person concerned had any travel history, to avoid this confusion.



COVID-19 causes a febrile, lower respiratory illness, which ranges from mild to severe. However, persons over age 50 or with pre-existing conditions are at increased risk severe illness and death. No vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19 infection is available. Care is supportive.

Symptomatic persons with possible exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 should be evaluated in a way that protects that patient, as well as the health care provider. A travel history or a history of exposure to a known patient with COVID-19 is important. CDC guidance on evaluating possible PUIs can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>. Keep in mind that as the epidemic changes and

community spread occurs in more nations, the guidance may also change. We at ADH are here to consult on the evaluation of such cases and facilitate testing, so please call the Outbreak Response Section with questions about potential Patients Under Investigation at

- 501-537-8969 Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm, or
- 1-800-554-5738 after hours or on weekends for any assistance.

The CDC website on this virus contains up-to-date information and a wealth of guidance on COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> . You can also find

information on this virus on ADH's website: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>.

We also encourage you to sign up for the Arkansas Health Alert Network (HAN), which the Arkansas Department of Health uses to give notification regarding outbreaks or other public health events. To learn more about HAN and sign up for alerts go to <https://hanregistration.adh.arkansas.gov>.

Please feel free to contact us at any time. We are here to assist you in any way that we can.

## Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield Gives \$817,000 to Upgrade Digital Health Network in State's Rural Hospitals

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield has awarded \$817,000 to the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership to help South Arkansas hospitals and clinics improve how they exchange patient information and ensure better continuity of care during patient transfers.

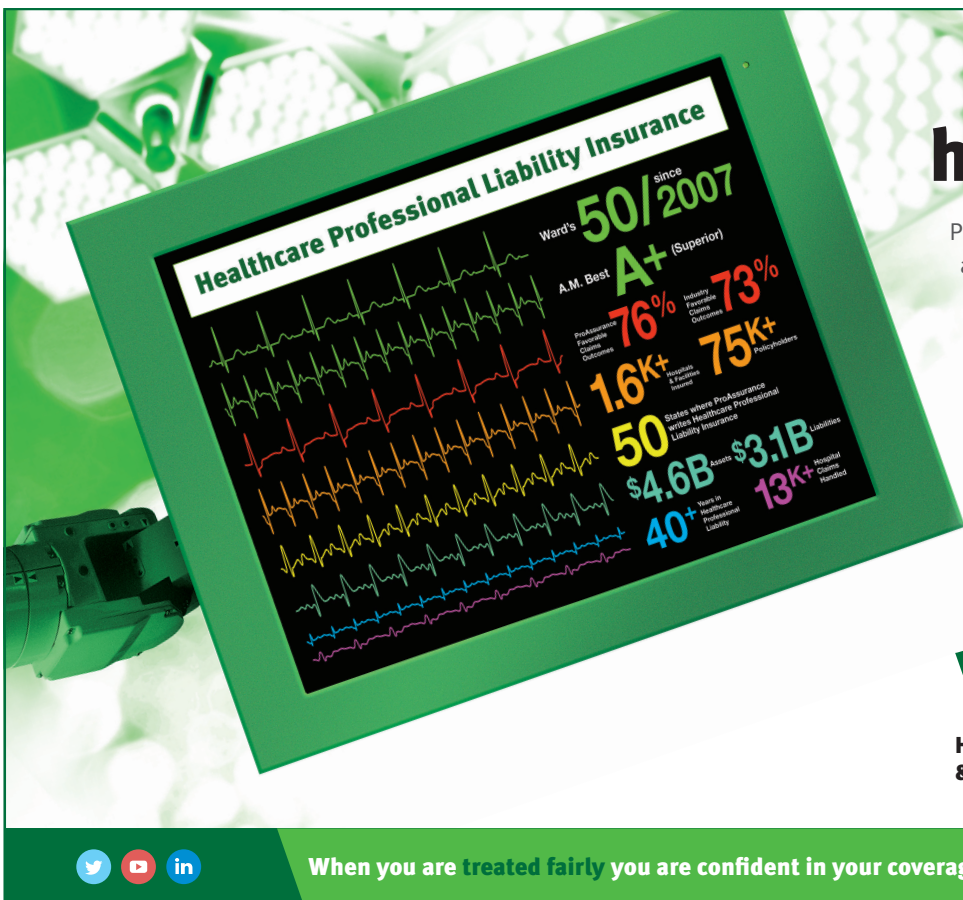
The Arkansas Rural Health Partnership is a nonprofit organization made up of 14 hospital members and 108 hospital-owned or affiliated clinics in the southern region of the state. The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) supports and works closely with the partnership on professional health education and public health issues.

While some of the partnership's hospitals and their clinics participate in the State Health Alliance for Records Exchange (SHARE), which is overseen by the Office of

Health Information Technology (a division of the Arkansas Department of Health), none of them have been able to fully participate in the exchange because of the high costs of full membership. Several member hospitals currently are only participating at the minimal level and three member hospitals are not sharing data at all.

The one-year grant will help them participate at the highest level. In addition, SHARE will provide ARHP hospitals and health care providers with real-time patient results that will help them identify clinical strengths and areas that might need improvement. SHARE's daily reports will make available to ARHP health care providers a 24-hour snapshot of critical events (such as emergency room visits and inpatient discharges).

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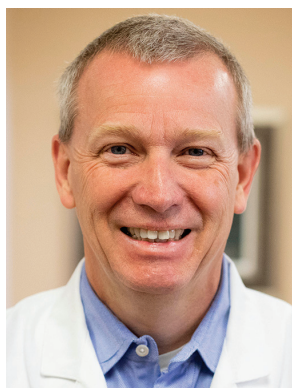
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## Member News

### CHI St. Vincent's Dr. Brad Baltz Among Top Oncologists in Central Arkansas



*Dr. Brad Baltz*

Dr. Brad Baltz of the CHI St. Vincent Oncology Clinic has been voted among the Top Oncologists in Central Arkansas by the readers of *Arkansas Life* magazine. The award signifies Dr. Baltz and CHI St. Vincent's commitment to provide the best cancer care in Arkansas.

"This recognition is a true honor because it comes directly from the incredible patients we work

with each and every day," said Dr. Baltz. "They come to us at an especially challenging time in their lives seeking an ally in their fight against cancer. That we can make such a difference and have the opportunity to aid them in that battle is the real reward."

*Arkansas Life* readers nominated doctors in 25 categories and the magazine featured Dr. Baltz and the other doctors with the most nominations in its list of Top Doctors. The full list of Top Doctors appeared in the Winter issue of *Arkansas Life*.

### Rheumatologist Dr. Zainab Siddiqui Joins CHI St. Vincent Little Rock Diagnostic Clinic



*Dr. Zainab Siddiqui*

Dr. Zainab Siddiqui has joined the team of leading rheumatologists at the CHI St. Vincent Little Rock Diagnostic Clinic, a multi-specialty medical practice founded in 1961 providing diagnostic and treatment services to patients throughout Central Arkansas.

Dr. Siddiqui most recently practiced at the Little Rock Rheumatology Clinic and McClellan Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital. She has also served as an adjunct Assistant Professor in the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' Division of Rheumatology since 2013. Dr. Siddiqui attended medical school at Fatima Jinnah Medical College for Women in Lahore, Pakistan and completed her residency in rheumatology and internal medicine at UAMS.

### Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield...

*Continued from page 4*

The donation from Arkansas Blue Cross will pay for the costs of upgrading equipment and annual dues for its member hospitals and clinics to participate fully in the exchange. There is no funding mechanism to assist rural hospitals and clinics with the annual costs of participating in SHARE.

"Making sure doctors and hospitals in all areas of the state have the information they need to treat their

patients is critical to overall quality. And we believe that all stakeholders have a role to play in making the health care delivery system more effective and sustainable for the people we serve," said Curtis Barnett, president and CEO of Arkansas Blue Cross. "We also know that we produce better results when we work collaboratively. To that end, Arkansas Blue Cross is embracing current and emerging technologies as a key strategy to use information more effectively to create a healthier Arkansas. We are confident this grant will bring us a step closer to that goal."



## The Breast Center at CARTI Receives \$7,500 Grant from Association for Medical Imaging Management and Canon Medical Systems USA, Inc.

*Grant to fund 2,500 MammoPad® breast cushions to improve patient comfort*

The Breast Center at CARTI is pleased to announce it has received a \$7,500 grant from The Association for Medical Imaging Management (AHRA) and Canon Medical Systems USA, Inc. Putting Patients First Program. The funds will allow The Breast Center to provide MammoPad® breast cushions for approximately 2,500 mammograms.

A MammoPad is a soft, warm cushion that provides comfort and eases patient anxiety, resulting in better tissue coverage during a mammogram. Additionally, the MammoPads increase the amount of breast tissue that is captured during a screening, which can lead to earlier detection of breast issues. The cushions have an adhesive backing which makes them easy to use and remove after each use.

"We are incredibly grateful to the AHRA and Canon Medical Systems USA, Inc. for awarding us this grant,

which will allow us to provide the most comfortable, personalized mammography experience to our patients," said Dr. Stacy Smith-Foley, medical director of The Breast Center at CARTI. "The Breast Center was created with one purpose in mind - to increase the number of women receiving lifesaving mammogram screenings. To achieve that mission, it's imperative that we eliminate barriers that often keep women from undergoing regular screenings. One of the reasons we know that many women postpone receiving their annual mammograms is because of the perceived pain and discomfort involved. The cushioning effect and warmth of a MammoPad provides comfort and helps the patients to relax. In addition to our other spa-inspired elements, including soft waffle-weave robes and private dressing rooms, we hope that the MammoPad is an element of comfort that will empower women to get regular mammograms."

## Baptist Health-Little Rock Earns National Recognition for Surgical Safety

Baptist Health-Little Rock recently became a Go Clear Award Gold Level recipient from the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses for its achievement in eliminating hazardous smoke from surgical procedures.

The Go Clear Award is given to recognize health care facilities that are committed to providing increased surgical safety by implementing practices that eliminate smoke caused by lasers and electrosurgery devices.

Surgical smoke is the unwanted by-product of energy-generating devices that are used in 90 percent of all surgeries. Inhalation and absorption of this smoke can cause serious health risks to patients and surgical staff.

Studies compare the inhalation of smoke from vaporized human tissue to the smoke created by cigarettes. The average daily impact of surgical smoke to the surgical team is equivalent to inhaling between 27 to 30 unfiltered cigarettes. An estimated 500,000 health care workers are exposed to laser or electrosurgical smoke each year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

Baptist Health-Little Rock is one of the first hospitals in Arkansas to receive this award. Baptist Health-Heber Springs also holds Go Clear Award Gold Level recognition.



# Calendar of Events

## Workplace Violence



*Melony Hilton*

**Wednesday,  
May 20, 2020**

**11:45 am – 12:30 pm  
Suite 802 of the  
Doctor's Building,  
500 S. University Avenue**

Speaker

**Melony Hilton, SVMIC**

This session addresses the growing concern over workplace violence including the potential warning signs and appropriate responses to bomb threats and active shooters.

## Medical Office Cybersecurity for Business People



*Justin Huffaker*

**Wednesday,  
June 17, 2020**

**11:45 am – 12:30 pm  
Suite 802 of the  
Doctor's Building,  
500 S. University Avenue**

Speaker:

**Justin Huffaker,  
DataMax Vice President  
of Strategic Technology**

In the wake of the Equifax security breach, approximately half of all Americans have had personal identity and financial credit data stolen. And, the Equifax breach is not an isolated incident. It seems that on a daily basis news headlines are trumpeting yet another high-profile company who has had defenses compromised and data stolen. As business people, it is a mistake to see these breaches as expressly "IT problems" when many cybercrimes are the result of con artists, simple trickery, and ignorance on the part of office workers. These so-called "socially-engineered attacks" are a highly effective threat vector and require specific defensive actions in order to be mitigated. A well-conceived business security strategy should not only involve deep technical tools but should also include employee education and technology usage best practices.

This presentation is geared for a business audience and provides insight into steps that can be taken at an individual level to increase information security.

## Lunch & Learn Topics

Do you have a topic you would like to have an industry expert speak about?

IF so, please call Derek at 501-687-0039, or email him at [derek@pulaskicms.org](mailto:derek@pulaskicms.org), with your topic suggestion.

**Please check the PCMS website at [pulaskicms.org](http://pulaskicms.org) for updated event information.**



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**Mission:**  
Promote medical care,  
professional growth, and  
public health.

**Vision:**  
To be a catalyst for change  
in how healthcare is  
viewed and implemented  
in Central Arkansas

## Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021

1

### Practice and Professional Viability

Maintain and enhance services,  
professional staff and communications  
to effectively implement the mission.

2

### Community Voice and Outreach

Create and participate in events to  
promote health; monitor and propose  
government initiatives that affect public  
health and safety; become the trusted  
resource in the community for overseeing  
the influencing of public health policy.

3

### Leadership

Growing the number of active members  
involved in the society's community  
outreach and service, and take care of  
the mental health of its members through  
the foundation.

**If you would like to be involved in the  
committee to help implement the  
Strategic Plan please call 501-687-0039.**