



PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY *News*

March 2022

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

PCMS Members Listed on AMP's Inaugural Fifty over 50 List

Arkansas Money & Politics Magazine published its first Fifty over 50 list in its February issue recognizing Arkansas' experienced, seasoned leaders. Congratulations to the PCMS members who were included.

- Jim English, MD (English Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery Center)
- Keith Mooney, MD (Arkansas Urology)
- Kris Shewmake, MD, FACS (Shewmake Plastic Surgery)
- Alonzo Williams, MD (Arkansas Diagnostic Center)

You can see the full list here: <https://www.armoneyandpolitics.com/2022-amp-fifty-over-50/>

Danyelle Musselman to Emcee UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute's "Be a Part of the Cure" Walk on April 30

The first lady of Arkansas Razorback Men's Basketball, Danyelle Musselman, will emcee the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute's "Be a Part of the Cure" Walk honoring all Arkansas cancer patients.

"Like many of us, I have lost friends and family members to cancer," said Musselman, who serves on the Cancer Institute's board of advisors. "Not one to sit on the bench, I'm lacing up my shoes and going



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Baptist Health Medical Center-Heber Springs Designated a 2022 Top 100 Critical Access Hospital

Baptist Health Medical Center-Heber Springs today announced it has been recognized as a 2022 Top 100 Critical Access Hospital. Compiled by The Chartis Center for Rural Health, this annual recognition program honors outstanding performance among the nation's rural hospitals based on the results of the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX™.



"We are honored to be recognized by The Chartis Center for Rural Health for our commitment to quality patient care," said Kevin Storey, president of Baptist Health Medical Center-Heber Springs. "Ultimately, we do not seek to earn awards, but it is nice to be recognized for the efforts our team puts forth in caring for our patients every day."

"Despite unprecedented adversity rural providers continue to display resiliency and a steadfast commitment

to their communities," said Michael Topchik, national leader with The Chartis Center for Rural Health. "Honoring the Top 100 is one of the highpoints of our year. We are delighted to recognize the exceptional

performance and innovation of this year's recipients, particularly in light of the extraordinary challenges facing America's rural health safety net."

Over the course of the last 12 years, the INDEX has established itself as the industry's most comprehensive and objective assessment of rural hospital performance. Leveraging publicly available data, the INDEX is trusted by rural hospitals, health systems with rural footprints, hospital associations and state offices of rural health across the country to measure and monitor performance across a variety of areas impacting hospital operations and finance.

Danyelle Musselman to Emcee UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute's "Be a Part of the Cure" Walk on April 30

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on a walk to raise money to fight cancer of all kinds and help patients battling the disease right here in the Natural State."

The walk is set for 8 a.m., Saturday, April 30, at War Memorial Stadium and outdoor course and will honor cancer patients, cancer survivors and those who have lost their battle with cancer, as well as raise funds for research programs at the Cancer Institute.

To register or donate, visit the event website at beapartofthecure.com.

The founding sponsor is Hickingbotham Investments, Inc. Supporting sponsors are Arkansas Children's Hospital, Eisai Co., FIS, GlaxoSmithKline, Proton International, Stuart Cobb and Barbara Hoover.

Registration for adults is \$25 and includes an event T-shirt. After April 1, the cost increases to \$30. The cost for youth ages 14-17 is \$10. Youth T-shirts can be ordered at an additional cost as long as supplies last.

"Our mission at the Cancer Institute is more important than ever as we see cancer impacting underserved areas disproportionately hard," said Michael J. Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., vice chancellor and director of the Cancer Institute. "All Arkansans, regardless of where they live, should have access to the latest treatments."

Walkers from across Arkansas are welcome to participate in person or virtually, rain or shine. Participants can enjoy live entertainment and food while also having the opportunity to learn about prevention, treatment and research programs provided by the Cancer Institute.

Alumnus Gives \$1 Million to Support Orthopaedics at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received a \$1 million gift from Mark S. Harriman, M.D., to support the new Orthopaedic and Spine Hospital and the UAMS Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

The gift is primarily in support of The Orthopaedic and Spine Hospital and will be honored with the naming of a walking garden on the third floor for Mark and Patricia Harriman. UAMS broke ground on the \$85 million hospital in April, which is expected to be completed in spring of 2023. Thirty percent of the gift will support orthopaedic research.

"The incredible generosity shown by the Harrimans will really make a difference for the patients and families at The Orthopaedic and Spine Hospital," said C. Lowry Barnes, M.D., professor and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. "The walking gardens will add a special touch, and we know that orthopaedic healing includes much more than just what occurs in the operating room. Dr. Harriman, as a retired orthopaedic surgeon, understands this very well. What we are doing in Orthopaedics at UAMS is dependent upon philanthropy such as this generous gift by the Harrimans."

Harriman, an orthopaedic surgeon from Germantown, Tennessee, recently retired after a 41-year career. He made the gift in appreciation of his time as a student in the UAMS College of Medicine and to help advance orthopaedic medicine in Arkansas.



"I believe very strongly in a rigorous and comprehensive medical education, and I feel that those criteria were met for me at UAMS," Harriman said. "When I arrived at Naval Medical Center San Diego after medical school graduation, I was very well prepared both academically and clinically for my surgical internship. Our gift to UAMS is given to honor

the institution that trained me for that internship and a subsequent orthopaedic surgery residency. In keeping with my specialty, it is an honor to devote 70% of our gift to The Orthopaedic and Spine Hospital and the remainder to orthopaedic research."

Harriman is a 1979 alumnus of the UAMS College of Medicine as well as a member of the Founders Society, the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society, College of Medicine Dean's Society and the Caduceus Club. After graduating from UAMS, he entered the U.S. Navy and completed his residency at Naval Medical Center San Diego. He met his wife there while she was a Navy nurse.

Once constructed, The Orthopaedic and Spine Hospital at UAMS will have four floors with more than 158,000 feet of space. It will be an extension of UAMS Medical Center and include 12 operating rooms for orthopaedics and spine surgery, private suites for patients, a pain management center, clinics for orthopaedics and physical medicine and rehabilitation, as well as space for resident education and faculty and administrative offices.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

March 21 – 25, 2022 - Spring Break for all schools in Arkansas

April 18, 2022 - Individual Tax Returns must be postmarked on or before this date.

UAMS Accepting Applications for Student Health Care Summer Programs

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is now accepting applications for its Summer Research Internship, Pre-Health Scholars Program and Pre-Medical Summer Scholars program.

The Summer Research Internship is geared toward rising high school juniors and seniors, and college students. Students who are interested in pursuing careers in research and health care will have the opportunity to conduct science-based research. Students will have an in-person experience conducting research of their interest with an assigned mentor. Stipends will be distributed to students who participate. The application deadline is March 18, and the internship runs from May 23 to July 29.

The Pre-Health Scholars Program is open to rising college freshman and sophomores. Students will learn about medical and public health interventions and innovations, collaborate with leaders in the health care industry and be exposed to cutting-edge technology currently used in professional training and laboratory experiments. It will include simulated clinical



experiences, a culinary medicine module, a medical interventions module and more. Students will receive a stipend at the end of the program. It is available in Pine Bluff, Jonesboro and El Dorado. The application deadline is March 11, and the program runs from June 6 to July 1.

The Pre-Medical Summer Scholars program, which is geared toward rising college juniors and seniors, will help prepare participants for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and allow them to participate in problem-based intensive workshops. Students will have access to individual counseling, guest speakers and personal development workshops. Physician and medical research shadowing will be available during the program as well. Students will also receive a stipend at the end of the program. Applications will be accepted through March 11, and the program runs from June 6 to July 29.

To see program requirements and apply, visit <https://ddei.uams.edu/outreach-programs/>.

For more information, contact Gabrielle Bullard, the Outreach Programs Coordinator, at GIBullard@uams.edu.

CHI St. Vincent's Urogynecology Clinic Welcomes J. Afton Cooper, MD

J. Afton Cooper, MD, a board certified gynecologist who is fellowship trained in minimally invasive gynecological surgery has joined St. Vincent Urogynecology Clinic. Dr. Cooper provides general gynecological care as well as advanced treatment and surgical options for patients with gynecological conditions.

Dr. Cooper completed a Fellowship in Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery at Cleveland Clinic Florida in Weston, Florida; and completed her Residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi.

For more information see chistvincent.com/urogyn



Dr. J. Afton Cooper

UAMS Researchers Find COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Prevalent Even Among Vaccinated

Researchers with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Office of Community Health and Research recently published four articles on a study they conducted that found that many adults in Arkansas receiving the COVID-19 vaccine are doing so despite experiencing some doubts about the shot.

The researchers determined – through a survey of 1,475 people at drive-thru clinics and community vaccination events between April 22 and July 6, 2021 – that 60% of adult recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine in Arkansas experienced at least some level of vaccine hesitancy. However, influence from family members and a desire to protect themselves against the coronavirus led to them overcoming those doubts and getting the vaccine. In addition to family and friends, hesitant adopters of the COVID-19 vaccine also reported that they were most likely to turn to a health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for trusted information about the vaccine.

“Personal testimonies from people who received the vaccine can be incredibly powerful,” said Rachel Purvis, Ph.D., an assistant professor and researcher in the Office of Community Health and Research. “Although some hesitant adopters said they didn’t trust any sources of information about the vaccine, we found that most do trust their doctor and their family.”

Vaccine hesitancy was designated by the World Health Organization as one of the top 10 threats to global health in 2019, prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As of Feb. 21, 2022, more than 900,000 people in the United States have died of COVID-19. Nationwide, nearly 80% of people five years of age and older have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination.

“It’s important to understand that many people may be hesitant and still choose to get vaccinated,” said Don Willis, Ph.D., another researcher and assistant professor in the Office of Community Health and Research. “This should be encouraging for health care providers. The fact that hesitancy is common among the vaccinated is also an important reminder that having questions and concerns is normal, and we hope knowing this will encourage those who are hesitant to ask any questions they may have.”

COVID-19 infections continue to increase at a rapid rate in Arkansas. As of Feb. 21, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) has reported more than 10,000 deaths from COVID-19. Less than 55% of the state’s eligible population is fully immunized. According to the ADH, more than 80% of the state’s COVID-19 hospitalizations since last February are among unvaccinated patients.

Other Key Study Findings:

- Thirty-one percent of respondents reported they were a little hesitant about receiving a COVID-19 vaccine; 19% said they were somewhat hesitant; and 10% said they were very hesitant.
- Black/African American respondents were more likely to report higher levels of vaccine hesitancy, with 76% of those surveyed reporting some level of hesitancy. Twenty-eight percent said they were very hesitant.
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander respondents were less likely to report higher levels of vaccine hesitancy than white respondents, possibly due to [significant outreach and education efforts implemented in Arkansas](#).

The study also found a connection between vaccine hesitancy and health literacy, which the CDC defines as “the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.” As respondents’ health literacy increased, their hesitancy toward vaccines decreased, the researchers found.

The four research articles related to this study can be read in their entirety by clicking the links below.

- [Hesitant but vaccinated assessing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among the recently vaccinated](#)
- [Facilitators to vaccination among hesitant adopters](#)
- [Motivations to vaccinate among hesitant adopters of the COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Trusted sources of COVID-19 vaccine information among hesitant adopters in the United States](#)

UAMS-led International Study Provides Insight on Maternal Thyroid Function, Risk of Gestational Hypertension

Results of an international four-year project led by Spyridoula Maraka, M.D., M.S., an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), were [published this month in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* medical journal](#), clarifying an association between maternal thyroid function and a risk of gestational hypertension.

The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology is part of *The Lancet* family of peer-review journals. Founded in 1823 and based in the United Kingdom, *The Lancet* is among the world's oldest and most respected medical journals.

Maraka, who is the director of the Endocrinology Fellowship program at UAMS, was the senior leader of the first-ever project to examine the association of gestational thyroid disease with gestational hypertension and preeclampsia, using individual participant data meta-analysis from prospective cohort studies around the world. She also is a member of the American Thyroid Association Task Force for updating the guidelines for the diagnosis and management of thyroid disease in pregnancy.

Maraka and primary author Freddy Toloza Bonilla, M.D., a former research fellow at UAMS who is now a UAMS research collaborator and an internal medicine resident at MetroWest Medical Center in Framingham, Massachusetts, worked closely with researchers at the Erasmus University Medical Center in The Netherlands and the Consortium on Thyroid and Pregnancy, an international endocrinology research collaboration that aims to analyze studies examining the diagnosis of, risk factors for and clinical impact of gestational thyroid disease.

The study found that subclinical hypothyroidism, a condition of mild thyroid deficiency, was associated with a higher risk of preeclampsia and the composite outcome of gestational hypertension or preeclampsia. Both a higher and a lower thyroid-stimulating hormone concentration (a marker of thyroid status) were associated with a higher risk of preeclampsia.

"Hypertensive disorders such as preeclampsia are among the leading causes of death in pregnant women and their fetuses, especially in third-world countries," Toloza said. "The association between abnormalities in thyroid function and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy has been assessed in multiple studies with inconsistent results, which could be due to methodological issues.

"Our approach enabled us to achieve robust and unbiased results that can be applied readily into clinical guidelines and can form the basis of future research," Maraka said. "This approach is a highly efficient way of adding a large body of new data to the field by reanalyzing previously collected data immediately, according to current standards."

The authors conclude, "These findings have potential implications for defining the optimal treatment target in women treated with levothyroxine (thyroid hormone) during pregnancy, which needs to be assessed in future interventional studies."

Funding for the study came from the Arkansas Biosciences Institute at UAMS and Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research.



<https://www.facebook.com/Pulaski-County-Medical-Society-100260252095789>

Research about Mask Mandates in Arkansas Schools Published in CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) contains [research on mask mandates in Arkansas school districts](#) and how the mandates helped to limit COVID-19 at the schools.

Researchers from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' (UAMS) Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health and College of Medicine teamed up with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the project.

"This important and well-conducted study involving Arkansas schools amply demonstrates the efficacy of facemasks during viral surges," said Mark Williams, Ph.D., dean of the UAMS College of Public Health.

The team of researchers focused primarily on COVID-19 cases among K–12 students and staff members in Arkansas public school districts with varying mask policies. The investigation began in August 2021 and concluded in mid-October.

ACHI President and CEO Joe Thompson, M.D., MPH, explained how this project displays why joint efforts are important when researching a public health crisis.

"Throughout the pandemic, ACHI helped inform local decision makers, including the policymakers, school leaders and parents who enabled this study," he said. "Future emergency response planning must include data and communication strategies to support these local decision makers."

The goal of the MMWR is to promote important, fact-based, objective information related to public health issues. The research selected for publishing in the MMWR are typically reports submitted to the CDC from a state health department.

Austin Porter, Dr.PH., MPH, an assistant professor of Health Policy and Management for the UAMS College of Public Health and deputy chief science officer at ADH, was one of the researchers on the project.

The CDC publishing the discoveries in the MMWR shows the depth and importance of the report, he said.

"We wanted to provide real data of the effectiveness of mask mandates in school and how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19," Porter said. "The MMWR is prestigious because it's the weekly publication for the CDC. When you have something published in it — you get a lot of attention from public health practitioners, legislators and the general public. The CDC is very selective as to what they publish."

When the coalition first began to gather and research the data, the goal was to get correct information to Arkansans about mask mandates in schools. Additionally, many of Arkansas' youth were still not eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

During the study, Arkansas' COVID-19 community transmission levels declined while vaccination coverage increased. Among the 233 school districts included in the study, 30%, 21%, and 48% had full, partial or no mask policies, respectively. Among 26 districts that switched from a no mask policy to either a full or partial policy, COVID-19 cases were higher than community rates during the period with no mask policy. However, when districts implemented a mask policy, the COVID-19 rates among students and staff decreased.

"We had some school districts in Arkansas going with a mask mandate while others did not," Porter said. "It all allowed for a natural experiment to occur and to see if there's a story to tell. Once we got the data and compared the numbers, it made perfect sense to write an article about masks helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at schools. We have the data to validate that mask mandates in schools work to stop the spread of COVID-19."

