



# PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY News

December 2021

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Pulaski County Medical Society

Brian Wayne, MD – *President*  
Krishnappa Prasad – *President-Elect*  
Dana Abraham, MD – *Vice President*  
Kay Chandler, MD – *Immediate Past President*  
Kelly Burks, MD  
Nicholas Brucker, MD  
Bobby Kakati, MD  
Sayyadul Siddiqui, MD  
Gary Wheeler, MD  
Danny Wilkerson, MD  
Julienne Thomas – *UAMS Student Representative*

## 2021 COMMITTEES

### Pulaski County Medical Society

Kay Chandler, MD  
*Nominating & Credentialing Chair*  
Gary Wheeler, MD  
*Bylaws Committee*  
Anna-Clair Pilkington  
*Social Media Committee*

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Pulaski County Medical Exchange

John T. Baber, MD – *President*  
Chandra Lingisetty, MD – *Vice President*  
Marvin Ashford, MD  
Melissa Graham, MD  
Angela Lovett, MD  
Renee Montgomery, MD  
Zainab Siddiqui, MD

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

## Pulaski County Medical Exchange is acquired by MedCom



The Pulaski County Medical Exchange (PCME) has always had the goal of offering the best physician locator services at the lowest possible cost for the members of the Pulaski County Medical Society. Over the past year and a half, the PCME board of directors has entertained several offers to purchase the Medical Exchange. Each offer was given serious consideration and rejected based on many different factors. The offer that MedCom submitted this fall was one the board had to give serious consideration due to economic factors they had no control over.

Prices were rising across the board which meant expenses were rising for the medical exchange as well. The medical exchange was using equipment that was aging, and proprietary software that was

## Pulaski County Medical Society, and Pulaski County Medical Exchange Membership Meeting Held December 2<sup>nd</sup>

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> the Pulaski County Medical Society (PCMS) held its annual membership meeting virtually again this year. The meeting was held to conduct the business of the society that can only be voted on by the membership. There were elections for the coming year as well as bylaws changes

The following members and officers were elected to the PCMS 2022 board.

Dr. Krishnappa Prasad,  
President

Dr. Nicholas Brucker,  
Vice President

Derek Rudkin, IOM, CAE,  
Secretary/Treasurer

Dr. Brian Wayne,  
Immediate Past President

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## We have your back, so you can move forward.

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When a problem occurs, you need a proactive partner that can navigate unforeseen challenges and help you solve the tough legal issues that come with practicing medicine. In our collaborative claims process, our in-house attorneys and our roster of local defense attorneys help you – our valued members – to be ready for what lies ahead.

Move forward with us at  
[www.svmic.com](http://www.svmic.com)



## Pulaski County Medical Exchange is acquired by MedCom

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not keeping up with those “off-the-shelf” brands that were supported and being updated regularly. The competition for workers has driven hourly wages up. Amazon, and others, are offering hourly rates much higher than what the Medical Exchange could offer as well as signing bonuses. The possibility of a national minimum wage of \$15 per hour, and the fact that major companies have announced \$15 per hour minimums for their employees, all played a part in forcing a hard look at the MedCom offer.

The offer from MedCom was attractive because of the following.

1. New equipment for operators that has more features for customers, and is portable to support working remotely.
2. MedCom uses the best call software in the business featuring regular support and updates.
3. MedCom’s insistence in making as many changes in the background as not to upset the flow of information customers were used to.
4. The references from the last three exchanges MedCom has acquired and the great things they said about the company and how they kept their word.

This is why the board recommended this sale to the membership, and the membership in attendance at the annual meeting December 2<sup>nd</sup> approved the sale.

We believe that this quote from Scot Davis, CEO of Arkansas Urology, says it all.

*“At Arkansas Urology, we have enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the Pulaski County Medical Society and Exchange. After speaking with Chase Wright, the CEO of MedCom, I am excited about the new services and products with this new partnership for after hour call services. We believe this will enhance the overall patient experience and improve communication with our partner hospitals and our patients.”*

## Pulaski County Medical Society, and Pulaski County Medical Exchange Membership Meeting Held December 2<sup>nd</sup>

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Dr. Bobby Kakati, Board member thru 2023

Dr. Ken Singleton, Board member thru 2023

Dr. Leticia Jones, Board member thru 2023

The bylaws changes for the society included the removal of the President Elect office, and the combination of the Secretary and Treasurer positions. It also added the ability of the Executive Director to hold the office of Secretary/Treasurer.

The following members were elected to the PCME 2022 board. Officers are elected by the board.

Dr. Marvin Ashford

Dr. John Baber

Dr. Melissa Graham

Dr. Chandra Lingisetty

Dr. Angela Lovett

Dr. Renee Montgomery

Dr. Priyantha Wejiwardane



## MedCom: What to Expect

With the acquisition of the Pulaski County Medical exchange by MedCom, Derek Rudkin sat down with Chase Wright, CEO of MedCom, and asked him some questions concerning the acquisition.

Q: Please tell us about yourself and MedCom.

A: **My name is Chase Wright and I am the CEO of MedCom. MedCom was started in 1956 by my grandmother, who was a nurse, for my grandfather's practice. This is a three-generation family business. My mother took over the company from my grandmother in 1975, and I took it over from her in 1996. We are 100% medical and have 3 locations: Texas, Illinois, and North Carolina. We are proud to add Arkansas to that list.**

Q: What will this purchase mean as far as service benefits to the current Pulaski County Medical Exchange customers?

A: **The purchase is going to allow MedCom to offer more advanced services to the customers of PCME. Using the latest technology, we are able to provide detailed reports, a web portal for access to messages and call schedules, faxing, e-mail, EMR delivery of messages, and personalized answering when you utilize the call-forwarding feature to forward your calls to MedCom. Not only will these great features be added, as long as the doctors are still members of the Pulaski County Medical Society current pricing will not increase.**

**If they do become inactive with the society then they will go to our normal pricing which is higher.**

Q: What will this purchase mean to the current employees of the Pulaski County Medical Exchange?

A: **The current employees will receive comprehensive health benefits and increased pay. Part-time employees will also be able to enjoy benefits. We will also be moving all operators to a remote work environment which will keep their costs down, avoid driving in hazardous conditions, as well as decreasing absenteeism. We believe it is a win-win for them.**

Q: You have said that new more modern equipment will be used for processing calls. What benefits will this new equipment have for the current customers?

A: **The new equipment will allow for faster call processing, in-depth reporting, personalized answering, voice mail features, e-mail, faxing, EMR integration, a web portal for access to messages and call schedule entry, and a voice logger that records all telephone activity. It is also portable to facilitate the operators working remotely.**

Q: If there is one thing you would want the current customers of the Pulaski County Medical Exchange to know about this acquisition, what would it be?

A: **This acquisition is for the benefit of the customers. You will still deal with the same people and hear the same voices on the phone.**

## Baptist Health Surgical and Specialty Clinic-Conway Welcomes Richard Rairigh, MD

General surgeon Richard Rairigh, MD, recently joined Baptist Health Surgical and Specialty Clinic-Conway.

Dr. Rairigh, a native of Daytona Beach, Florida, received his medical education from the East Tennessee State University Quillen College of Medicine. He completed residency training from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Dr. Rairigh recognizes that each patient is unique and strives to provide compassion, education for patient autonomy and trust.

"I couple these values with skilled surgical care to heal my patients and avoid harm," he said. "My goal is to provide excellent care, allowing each patient to perform at their highest capacity."



*Dr. Richard Rairigh*

## PCMS Funded 12th Street Pop-Up Clinic Holds Fourth and Final Clinic

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, at our fourth and final pop-up clinic, we again provided Covid vaccinations, flu vaccines, and basic health screening and consultation services! Over 18 members from the community came for vaccinations and screenings! While many of them came primarily to receive the covid vaccine, most all seemed very appreciative of the other services that we offered. Many had not been to a doctor since well before Covid began, and several of them had serious and undiagnosed chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

Over the course of our four clinics 32 first Covid vaccines, 15 second covid vaccines, 14 booster vaccines, and 16 flu vaccines were administered! Plus, numerous people were referred for follow up care at the 12th St. Health and wellness clinic! Over 65 patients were served in total!

Services were rendered by student volunteers from UAMS College of Pharmacy, College of Medicine, and College of Health Professions students; students from UALR; UAMS faculty; and the UAMS mobile unit. This was made possible by our hosts, Saint Andrew United Methodist Church, our funding sponsor Pulaski County Medical Society, and our faculty mentors at the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Health and Wellness Center.

In addition to providing services to the community, this provided a unique collaborative and interprofessional learning experience for our volunteers. We hope that from this they will be encouraged to work collaboratively in the future and pursue projects for their communities and homes.



## UAMS Raises \$15 Million Toward NCI Designation

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) announced November 10th that it has raised more than \$15 million towards NCI Designation, the halfway point toward its \$30 million goal.

A recent \$1 million gift from Kim and Chris Fowler of Jonesboro, who were in attendance at the news conference, put UAMS over the halfway mark.

"Raising \$15 million for a single cause in such a short time is remarkable, and I want to thank every single donor who has helped make this possible," said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, UAMS chancellor and UAMS Health CEO. "We are humbled and extremely grateful to the Fowlers for their generosity and love for their fellow Arkansans. The Fowler family is beloved and well-known for being successful in business, but they are also known for their giving spirit. This gift is representative of that."

"Cancer did not take a break during the pandemic, and neither did we," said Cancer Institute Director Michael J. Birrer, M.D., Ph.D. "NCI Designation is an ambitious challenge that demands the hearts and minds of everyone you see here, and hundreds more across UAMS and the state of Arkansas."

Chris Fowler is the president of Fowler Foods, Inc. He is a first-generation Taco Bell and a second-generation KFC franchisee owner. Together, Kim and Chris Fowler own

and operate over 91 KFCs and Taco Bell restaurants in an eight-state area.

The Fowlers made their gift in appreciation of James Y. Suen, M.D., who treated Chris Fowler when he was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2011. The gift also continues the philanthropic legacy of Chris Fowler's parents, Wallace W. and Jama Fowler, who have given millions to support health care and education in northeast Arkansas.

"Kim and I are honored to make this donation in honor of James Suen, a truly world-class doctor," said Fowler. "A lot of people say, I owe my life to someone, but I can truly say it, not only to Dr. Suen but the entire team at UAMS. The people of Arkansas don't know what they truly have at UAMS until they need it. It is a diamond in the rough. We know that UAMS will continue to provide world-class treatment through not only the citizens of Arkansas, but across the world."

"I am pleased to share that we are making strong progress toward our goal, and gifts like Kim and Chris's are essential in helping us continue to hire bright new researchers who can bring in additional grant funding," Birrer said. "I can't think of a better way to impact the future of Arkansas than to invest in better health the way the Fowlers have."

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## Dr. Hooman Motahari Joins CHI St. Vincent Diabetes and Endocrinology Clinic

CHI St. Vincent announces that Dr. Hooman Motahari has joined the team of leading endocrinologists at the CHI St. Vincent Diabetes & Endocrinology Clinic in Little Rock. Dr. Motahari is now seeing patients at the clinic, located at 701 North University Avenue, Suite 201.

After attending medical school at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, Iran, Dr. Motahari completed his residency in internal medicine at St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway, New York where he served as chief medical resident. He completed his fellowship training in endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) where he most recently served as chief endocrinology fellow.

The CHI St. Vincent Diabetes and Endocrinology Clinic diagnoses and treats diabetes type 1, diabetes type 2 and disorders of the thyroid, pituitary and adrenal glands. Specialists work with patients to properly diagnose their condition and develop a personalized treatment plan.



*Dr. Hooman Motahari*

## UAMS Receives \$18.9 Million NIH Award to Address Health Disparities

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received \$18.9 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support new research and interventions that will focus on reducing cancer and cardiovascular disease disparities among people who live in rural areas and African American populations across Arkansas.

The five-year award from the NIH National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) will support the establishment of the Center for Research, Health and Social Justice – one of only 11 Multiple Chronic Disease (MCD) Centers funded in the United States. Leading the grant are Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health faculty members Carol Cornell, Ph.D., a professor and chair of the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, and director of the NIMHD-funded Arkansas Center for Health Disparities, and Peebles Fagan, Ph.D., MPH, a professor and director of the Center for the Study of Tobacco.

"This exciting new award ranks among our largest and will support a highly innovative social justice program to guide research, training and community engagement activities," said Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D., UAMS vice chancellor

for Research and Innovation. "The elimination of health disparities and promotion of health equity is a Health People goal for our nation and for Arkansas. According to the Advisory Committee for Healthy People 2020, health disparities are systemic and plausibly avoidable."

The overall goals of the center are to:

- Advance the science of chronic disease health disparities through multidisciplinary team science to improve cancer and cardiovascular outcomes.
- Facilitate research and training opportunities to strengthen the capacity of researchers and community members to develop interventions that reduce cancer and cardiovascular disease disparities using social justice principles.
- Support academic-community partnerships to address the root causes of chronic disease disparities among African Americans and in rural areas in the state.

"This is a remarkable achievement for UAMS and the College of Public Health," said Dean [Mark Williams](#), Ph.D.

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## UAMS Raises \$15 Million Toward NCI Designation

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The Cancer Institute has hired multiple researchers over the past year, with 10 coming in March. They are part of the first wave of research expansion and growth as the Cancer Institute builds toward applying for NCI Designation.

NCI Designation is a highly competitive assessment process during which cancer centers must demonstrate outstanding depth and breadth of high-quality cancer research and treatment. Receiving designation brings substantial benefits, including the ability to access significant federal research funding and offer clinical trials not available to non-designated centers. It also is expected to result in a \$72 million economic impact on Arkansas and create approximately 1,500 new jobs over five years.

In 2019, thanks to the Republican Women's Legislative Caucus, the Arkansas Senate and House unanimously passed Senate Bill 151, which created an account to deposit funds for NCI Designation, and Gov. Asa Hutchinson signed it into law in March that year. The

caucus made the bill a priority in its Dream Big for Arkansas Initiative. Earlier this year, members of the caucus donated \$2,021 to UAMS for NCI Designation.

Following the passage of Senate Bill 151, state lawmakers approved a combination of taxes that would raise \$10.5 million annually for the effort. UAMS has pledged to raise \$30 million in private funds to support that effort. It took just over three years to reach the halfway mark, most of which took place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are 71 NCI-designated cancer centers in 36 states across the country, with the closest to Arkansas being in Memphis (pediatrics only), Dallas and Oklahoma City. Approximately 68 percent of the funds awarded by the National Cancer Institute for research and clinical trials goes to NCI-designated centers. The centers without such designation are left to compete for the other 32 percent, and many NCI community outreach and program grants are only offered to NCI-designated cancer centers.

## UAMS Receives \$18.9 Million NIH Award to Address Health Disparities

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"The Center for Research, Health and Social Justice will be a tremendous catalyst for accomplishing our institutional goal of improving health and health care for all Arkansans."

The new funding is also critically important to the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, which is working to attain NIH National Cancer Institute (NCI) Designation, said [Michael Birrer](#), M.D., Ph.D., vice chancellor and director of the UAMS institute.

"This award expands on our statewide efforts to address three major risk factors for cancer: tobacco use, obesity/nutrition issues, and alcohol use," Birrer said.

"Arkansas communities are hit disproportionately by cancer compared to other states and the nation. We now have an opportunity to address cancer risk and social determinants of cancer risk factors."

The new center already has more than 50 community and organization partners and collaborators across Arkansas and at research institutions in other states. Partners include the Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Education, Coalition for a Tobacco Free Arkansas, the City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, school districts and universities in Arkansas, and other community organizations in Arkansas communities. Many UAMS entities are involved, including the Division of Research and Innovation, Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute and the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement. Other key partners are Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, and Eastern Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

"Over the past five years, Pulaski County and UAMS have partnered on several projects designed to improve the quality of life in our communities, specifically in largely underserved and vulnerable communities," said Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde. "In partnership and through the funding provided by this grant, we will be able to further expand services into areas that remain primarily underserved and vulnerable to the effects of health disparities."

Brian Gittens, Ed.D., MPA, vice chancellor for the UAMS Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, will have a significant collaborative role on the social justice component of the project.

"This award provides us a great opportunity to transform our own institution as well as others to improve

health through training and diversifying the research workforce," said Gittens. "Social justice approaches go beyond changing chronic disease risk factors and requires that we create a model research ecosystem, social and structural conditions, and community infrastructures that support the ability to eliminate cancer and cardiovascular disease disparities."

"Race and place-based health disparities are long-standing, and the solutions require multilevel approaches that integrate solutions across disciplines, sectors and organizations," Fagan said. "Our over 50 partnerships, including many partners in Pulaski County, provide the foundation for repositioning and resetting the dialogue, our approaches, and our collective actions toward eliminating multiple chronic disease disparities in rural areas and among African American Arkansans."

The Center includes five major components:

- a. Training to build the next generation of researchers and practitioners to address cancer and cardiovascular disease disparities across the state.
- b. Community engagement to help communities become more socially just and in turn facilitate access and uptake of preventive health care related to cancer and cardiovascular disease.
- c. Research to reduce tobacco use among African Americans in Lee, Chicot, Phillips and Desha counties.
- d. Research in barbershop settings in rural areas to reduce excessive alcohol use among African American males.
- e. Research to examine the effectiveness of school nutrition policy on reducing obesity and providing good nutrition to children in low resource rural schools in Northwest Arkansas.

"We've been funding health disparities research through the Arkansas Center for Health Disparities since 2007, but this new award takes our efforts to an entirely different level," Cornell said. "The new Center for Research, Health and Social Justice will greatly expand our partnerships in this work and increase opportunities for research, training and community engagement. Perhaps most importantly, the focus on social justice in every aspect of the new Center and coordination with other centers across the country will accelerate progress toward our ultimate goal of eliminating health disparities."