



PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

News

September 2025

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pulaski County Medical Society

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Leticia Jones, MD – *Vice President*

Kelly Burks, MD – *Immediate Past President*

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2025 COMMITTEES

Pulaski County Medical Society

Kelly Burks, MD

Nominating & Credentialing Chair

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pulaski County Medical Exchange

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Inge Carter, MD

Jeffery Hartsell, MHSA

Will Henson

Renee Ross, MD

Naveen Yarlagadda, MD

Pulaski County Medical Society

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

Pulaski County Medical Exchange Announces Adjustment in Service Rates

The following notice was emailed to billing email addresses on file for users of the Pulaski County Medical Exchange on August 15, 2025.

"We are writing to inform you of an upcoming adjustment to the Medical Exchange service rate. Effective July 1, 2026 (Q3 2026), the rate will increase by \$2.00 per physician per month. We understand the importance of budget planning and are providing this notification well in advance of the effective date to allow you and your clinics ample time to incorporate this change into your 2026 budgets.

This adjustment, the first since 2005, reflects the significant increase in personnel costs over the past two decades. We are committed to providing competitive compensation and benefits to our employees, and this rate adjustment will help us ensure their continued well-being and maintain the high quality of service you expect."

2025 Annual Business Meeting Notifications

PCMS Bylaws state "The slate of candidates shall be presented to the Board of Directors for approval and shall be mailed to all members prior to the Annual Business Meeting". It also says "bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members voting at a regular or special meeting of the Society. Proposed amendments shall be mailed to all members at least thirty days before the vote on such amendments is taken".

Pulaski County Medical Society Board Nominees:

Officer Nominees:

Letitia Jones, MD –

Diane Wilder, MD –

Derek Rudkin, IOM, CAE –

Ken Singleton, MD –

President

Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer

Immediate Past President

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Time Is Everything

Elizabeth Woodcock, MBA, FACMPE, CPC

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The most precious asset of a medical practice is the provider's time, a critical and non-inventoriable resource. Unfortunately, most providers struggle to move efficiently through the day, left with significant piles of work (physical and digital) at day's end. Mastering the art of working intelligently can enhance efficiency, but this takes effort. To accomplish this, consider embracing one of the following efficiency tips:

CAUTIOUSLY LEVERAGE YOUR "FREE" EMPLOYEE (THE PATIENT)

Encourage patients to participate in their own care, ideally collecting data directly from them. This may include, but not be limited to, past family social history, history of present illness, and current medications. Engage your care team in connecting with patients to determine and document other essential elements, including vitals. Encourage your care team to think of an outpatient encounter like an operating room – the patient should be prepped and ready for the provider when they "scrub" into the exam room.

PERFORM A MORNING HUDDLE AND AN AFTERNOON SWEEP

Both are brief touch-base meetings to prepare for the day – and the next. Incorporate a two-minute debrief on what didn't go so well that day, reflecting on mistakes or challenges, gathering suggestion(s) from the whole team. Preparing for the day and encouraging improvements are the best long-term investments a practice can make to boost efficiency.

TAME THE INBOX

The volume of messages has surged in recent years, adding to the challenges related to provider burnout. Train care teams and provide appropriate protocols and guidance that will allow them to scrub messages before they hit a provider's inbox. Messages should be considered a care team responsibility, not a personal message to the provider. Via Electronic Health Record (EHR) system settings, establish a minimum-allowed character for messages, auto-sunset messages over a certain age, and carefully purge "thank you" responses. Establish accountability for every inbox, including monitoring the message turnaround time by staff member.

MANAGE PRESCRIPTIONS

Recognize the symbiotic nature of medications and your collective practice efforts. When medications run out, action is required. Therefore, consider a standard refill reminder for practice staff to proactively schedule patients before renewals are due. Synchronize routine medications on a single annual (or quarterly, as clinically appropriate) visit.

ROUTE NORMAL TESTS

Unless a provider chooses otherwise, send normal test results directly to the patient portal for patients who are confirmed to use the portal. For those who haven't been verified as portal users, normal results should be mailed. Arrange for pre-visit tests (and address other pertinent care gaps) that can be anticipated, reviewing results during the encounter.

PRE-VISIT PLANNING

Instruct your care teams to review patients' charts in advance of the visit; consider a checklist based on the provider's expectations. For example, the team may review for any intra-visit messages, referrals that were placed, and the results of testing that was ordered.

EVALUATE YOUR STAFF'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the office-based medical assistant has evolved into a multi-faceted position streamlining the flow of information between patient and providers, who need to respond proactively. Consider role-playing the following scenarios: message-taking, working through conflict within a team, collecting medications, and managing a refill, referral, or test result. The mock trial need not be perfect, but it's important to recognize that the role of the care team is changing. Delegate, delegate, delegate!

2025 Annual Business Meeting Notifications

(continued from page 1)

Pulaski County Medical Society Board Nominees: (continued)

Nominees for Board of Directors (2-year term)

James Walker, MD
Courtney Bundrick, MD
Anthony Johnson, MD

Pulaski County Medical Exchange Board Nominees:

Nominees for Board of Directors: (1 year term)

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jesse Abeler, MD | Renee Montgomery, MD |
| Marvin Ashford, MD | Inge R. Carter, MD |
| Jeffrey Hartsell, MHSA | Richard Wirgis, MD |
| Will Henson | Naveen Yarlagadda, MD |



**You and a Guest
are Cordially Invited to the
Pulaski County Medical Society &
Pulaski County Medical Exchange
Annual Meeting & Dinner**

**Thursday, November 6, 2025
Robinson Center Ballroom**

**5:45 pm - 6:45 pm
Reception**

**6:00 pm - 6:15 pm
Membership Meeting**

**6:15 pm - 6:30 pm
Medical Exchange Meeting**

Dinner and program begins at 7:00 pm

The program consists of the following:

SPEAKER: Salvatore Mangione, MD
Author and Associate Professor of Medicine at the
SKMC of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia

Presentation of the 2025 Outstanding Student Award

2025 Presidents Award for a Lifetime
of Outstanding Contributions to Medicine
Dr. Debra Morrison

QR Code:
\$80 per person (members and guests of members)
\$90 per person (non-members and guests of non-members)
Scan QR Code to register with credit card
or go to <https://pulaskicms.org/event-registration/>
(please list the names of people you are paying for)

Deadline to Register: October 29, 2025.
No registrations will be accepted
after this date.

2025



Speaker:
Salvatore Mangione, MD
Author and Associate Professor of
Medicine at the SKMC of Thomas
Jefferson University in Philadelphia

Dr. Debra Morrison
2025 President's Award for a
Lifetime of Outstanding
Contributions to Medicine recipient

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2025 PCMS Carolyn Clayton Scholarships Awarded

The 2025 PCMS Carolyn Clayton Scholarships were awarded on August 4, 2025 to Jennifer Chen and Kyrilos Sadaka during freshman orientation week at UAMS.

Jennifer Chen, a lifelong resident of Little Rock, graduated from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in 2025 with degrees in Biology and Biochemistry. She is now pursuing her medical education at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences as a member of the Class of 2029. This past summer, Jennifer was honored with the 2025 PCMS Carolyn Clayton Scholarship in recognition of her academic achievements and commitment to service. During her undergraduate years, she jumpstarted both the Special Olympics and the American Lung Cancer Screening Initiative on campus, reflecting her dedication to community health. She has also enjoyed conducting biological research and looks forward to continuing and expanding her involvement in research at UAMS. Outside of medicine, Jennifer volunteers at the Veterans Hospital in Little Rock and enjoys playing tennis and reading in her free time.

Kyrilos Sadaka was raised in Little Rock and graduated from Catholic High School for Boys. He went on to study Chemistry at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where he developed a strong interest in science and research, before beginning medical school at the

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Although still undecided on a specialty, Kyrilos is eager to explore different fields of medicine with the goal of finding where he can best serve patients. What he does know is that he hopes to build his career here in Little Rock, giving back to the community that has shaped him. Outside of school, Kyrilos enjoys spending time with family and friends, staying active, and engaging with his church community. He looks forward to growing as a physician while remaining rooted in Arkansas.



Scholarship recipients (LtoR) Jennifer Chen, PCMS Executive Director Derek Rudkin, and Kyrilos Sadaka

2025 Freshman Orientation Luncheon

The Pulaski County Medical Society hosted lunch on Tuesday, August 4, 2025 during freshman orientation at the school of medicine. Executive Director Derek Rudkin, IOM, CAE gave a brief presentation about the society and its rich history with the college of medicine. Freshman Jacob Pauley was the winner of the Littman Classic III stethoscope that the society gave away on Friday, August 8, 2025.



Stethoscope winner: Jacob Pauley

Baptist Health College Little Rock Records Highest Fall Enrollment in Five Years

Baptist Health College Little Rock (BHCLR) reached the highest enrollment in five years this fall with 684 students in enrollment. This is a 15% increase from fall 2024 enrollment. This semester, 368 traditional nursing, 150 practical nursing and 166 allied health students are enrolled.

The increase in enrollment is attributed to the growth in programs to meet market demand, student recruitment and retention and the faithful dedication of faculty and staff to improving student's experience at the college.

"We're thrilled to see more students choosing Baptist Health College Little Rock to begin their careers in health care," said Dr. Karen James, BHCLR interim



president and dean of allied health programs. "This record enrollment reflects our commitment to growing programs that meet workforce needs, supporting students through their journey and ensuring they are prepared to lead and serve in their communities."

"The growth we're seeing this fall is a reflection of students' trust in Baptist Health College

Little Rock and the opportunities our programs provide," said Kristin Waddell, registrar and director of admissions at BHCLR. "It's exciting to welcome the largest student body we've had in five years and to know these future health care professionals are choosing BHCLR as the place to begin their journey."

Baptist Health Perinatal Neonatal Symposium Set for Oct. 16 at Chenal Country Club in Little Rock

Baptist Health invites health care professionals to participate in the Baptist Health Perinatal Neonatal Symposium on Thursday, Oct. 16, in Little Rock. This year's theme is "Holding it All Together."

The symposium, which will be at the Chenal Country Club, 10 Chenal Club Blvd. is designed for dedicated medical professionals, including RNs, MDs and RTs – particularly those on women's and children's staff, who are committed to advancing maternal and neonatal care.

This symposium will provide an in-depth exploration of crucial topics focused on strengthening maternal and neonatal care. Participants gain valuable insights into strategies for neonatal stabilization, for eliminating preventable maternal deaths, effectively reducing maternal morbidity and ultimately improving the health of women in Arkansas. Dr. William W. "Sam" Greenfield, the Arkansas Section Chair for the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology, is the keynote speaker.

Early registration is encouraged as seats are limited and may fill up quickly.

Registration is \$35 for non-Baptist Health employees and includes lunch. Baptist Health employees can email peri-neonatal-symposium@baptist-health.org to receive a promo code for free registration. Payment of class fees is nonrefundable.

For more information, visit baptist-health.com/perinatal-neonatal-symposium.



UAMS Researchers Secure \$3.4 Million in NIH Grants after Finding Clues to Stealthy Cancer-Linked Virus

New findings at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) toward unlocking the secrets of a stealthy virus linked to cancer have led to two grants totaling \$3.42 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Mark Manzano, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the College of Medicine Department of Microbiology and Immunology, is studying how Kaposi sarcoma-associated herpesvirus (KSHV) causes cancer and how it evades the immune system. He received a five-year \$3.02 million NIH R01 grant and is co-principal investigator on a two-year \$420,335 NIH R21 grant. Craig Forrest, Ph.D., a professor in the same department, shares the co-principal investigator role on the R21 grant. Both Manzano and Forrest are members of the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute and the Center for Microbial Pathogenesis and Host Inflammatory Responses.

The virus is known for its ability to go into hiding, a dormant state called latency, where it avoids detection while still quietly helping tumors grow. Understanding how the virus stays hidden, and how to shut it down, could one day lead to new treatments or even ways to eliminate it entirely.

"This virus is like a master of disguise," Manzano said. "It doesn't need to cause mutations like many cancer-causing agents. It brings its own cancer-causing genes and reprograms the cell."

KSHV is a member of the herpesvirus family and is most often associated with Kaposi sarcoma, a rare cancer that mostly targets people with weakened immune systems,

such as those living with HIV and post-transplant patients. It often first appears in the mouth as painful oral lesions, and it affects the skin, lymph nodes and internal organs. It is also linked to other illnesses such as primary effusion lymphoma and multicentric Castlemans disease. Although rare in the U.S., KSHV is widespread in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where infection rates can exceed 80%.

Manzano is using the gene-targeting tool called CRISPR to study how KSHV behaves inside cells. His work revealed a surprise that became the basis for the NIH R01 grant: a previously unknown RNA molecule produced by the virus in a location typically used during active replication.

"We found this RNA where we didn't expect it and in an area that's only supposed to be active when the virus is replicating," Manzano said. "But this RNA was showing up during latency, when the virus is supposed to be silent."

The discovery changed his team's thinking about how the virus stays dormant. Manzano believes this RNA acts like a controller, dictating the viral DNA's shape to keep it in its cancer-promoting latent state rather than switching to its active, replicating phase, which often kills the cancer cell.

Understanding this control mechanism could lead to new ways to "break" latency, forcing the cancer cells to die.

"If you remove this RNA, everything changes," he said. "The viral DNA starts to loosen up, and the virus may begin to wake up."

While most researchers have focused on the virus's latency genes, which are active while it's hiding, the



Dr. Chrystal Lau

Dr. Chrystal Lau Joines Arkansas Otolaryngology Center

Arkansas Otolaryngology is happy to welcome Dr. Chrystal Lau, an otolaryngologist providing comprehensive care in general and pediatric ENT. She is a graduate of Stanford University and completed medical school and residency at UAMS. Her services include General ENT (ear infections, sinus issues, throat concerns, and hearing loss), Pediatric ENT (specialized ENT care for infants, children, and teens) as well as Voice & Swallowing Disorders (diagnosis and treatment to restore comfort and function). Dr. Lau is seeing patients at our Kanis and University clinic locations.

UAMS Researchers Secure \$3.4 Million in NIH Grants...

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more exploratory R21 grant supports the study of lytic, or active, viral genes. Forrest and Manzano suspect the lytic genes could be playing a bigger role in cancer than previously thought.

"Most of the field has ignored these lytic genes because they show up in only 1% to 2% of tumor cells," Manzano said. "But we think they might be producing signals that help the tumor grow or suppress the immune response."

Manzano sees the long-term goal of this research as finding a way to either silence the virus permanently or eliminate it from the body altogether. One promising strategy could involve targeting the RNA molecule his lab discovered.

"We might be able to develop an antisense therapy, something that binds to the RNA and triggers the cell to destroy it," he said. "That technology already exists; the question is whether we can adapt it to target this virus."

Manzano believes a vaccine may be more feasible in connection with the proteins produced during viral reactivation, which is the focus of Forrest's work and a potential angle for future prevention efforts.

Forrest also received an NIH R01 totaling \$2.9 million that was announced in January and focuses on a key

viral protein called LANA (latency-associated nuclear antigen), which helps KSHV evade the immune system and maintain latency.

Although the research centers on KSHV, Manzano said the findings could extend to other herpesviruses, including another cancer-causing virus Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and herpes simplex virus. Like KSHV, those viruses use latency to persist in the body, usually for life.

The R01 grant was awarded by the NIH National Institute of Dental & Craniofacial Research under Award Number R01DE035025. The R21 grant was awarded by the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases under Award Number R21AI189385.

The content of this news release is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.

Leading up to the R01 and R21 awards, Manzano and Forrest received support from the UAMS Center for Microbial Pathogenesis and Host Inflammatory Responses, a Center of Biomedical Research Excellence funded by the NIH National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

Baptist Health Women's Clinic-North Little Rock Welcomes Sabrina Doffing, MD

Obstetrician-gynecologist Sabrina Doffing, MD, recently joined Baptist Health Women's Clinic-North Little Rock.

Dr. Doffing, a native of McAllen, Texas, earned her degree from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Medical School and completed her residency through the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

"I believe every woman deserves exceptional, personalized care. This can include anything from preventive gynecological care, reproductive health, menopause management and much more," Dr. Doffing said. "I also believe that exceptional care begins with strong, trusting relationships. Every patient deserves to

feel heard, respected and supported in their unique journey."

Baptist Health Women's Clinic-North Little Rock, located at 3201 Springhill Drive, Suite 130 in North Little Rock, provides the quality care patients need more conveniently than ever. The clinic is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Dr. Sabrina Doffing

CARTI Expands Radiation Oncology Team

Dr. Ha Pham Brings Expertise in Clinical Research, Brachytherapy

Ha Pham, M.D., Ph.D., recently joined CARTI's radiation oncology team. Now seeing patients at CARTI's flagship campus in Little Rock, Dr. Pham has extensive experience in clinical research and brachytherapy, a minimally invasive method of radiation treatment that places radioactive sources close to or within tumors.

"At CARTI, we are dedicated to offering leading-edge, patient-centered care—a commitment that Dr. Pham also shares," said Matthew Hardee, M.D., Ph.D., medical director of radiation oncology. "Dr. Pham delivers tailored treatment options to improve patient outcomes and enhance quality of life."

Before serving as chief resident in radiation oncology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Dr. Pham was awarded the prestigious American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Bayer Clinical Oncology Research (CORE) Training Fellowship. A graduate of the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, she completed

her internship at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Dr. Pham received her Ph.D. in chemistry from Carnegie Mellon University, followed by a postgraduate fellowship in therapeutic radiology at Yale University School of Medicine. She holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University, where she graduated magna cum laude.

Dr. Pham has been published in multiple peer-reviewed journals and has additional manuscripts currently in development. She is affiliated with the ACCR, American Society for Radiation Oncology, Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology, American Brachytherapy Society, American College of Radiation Oncology and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.



Dr. Ha Pham

RAPA Welcomes Dr. Paige Johnson



Dr. Paige Johnson

Radiology Associates, P.A. (RAPA) is proud to welcome Paige Johnson, M.D. to our team of physicians. Dr. Johnson joined RAPA in July of 2025 and will be serving our central Arkansas locations.

Dr. Johnson is an interventional and diagnostic radiologist. She completed her residency and fellowship training at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Prior to that, she earned her medical degree and completed a general surgery internship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in Little Rock in June of 2020.

Originally from Texarkana, Dr. Johnson and her husband are excited to return to their home state. We are pleased to have her join RAPA and look forward to the expertise and compassionate care she will bring to our practice.

Tyler Knapp, DO, Joins Baptist Health Family Clinic—Otter Creek

Baptist Health Family Clinic—Otter Creek recently welcomed Tyler Knapp, DO.

A Hot Springs native, Dr. Knapp earned his medical degree from the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine-Arkansas. He then completed his residency in Internal Medicine-Pediatrics at the Kansas University-Wichita School of Medicine. Dr. Knapp's specialties include internal medicine, pediatrics and primary care.

"Listening to the patient is the center of how I practice," he said. "I always do my best to meet patients where they are and strive to be approachable to all patients."

Baptist Health Family Clinic—Otter Creek, located at 11321 Interstate 30, Suite 101, in Little Rock, provides the quality care patients need more conveniently than ever. The clinic is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon.



Dr. Tyler Knapp