



PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY News

September 2021

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Pulaski County Medical Society

500 S. University Ave., Suite 311
Little Rock, AR 72205
Phone: 501.687.0039
Fax: 501.663.1737
Email: derek@pulaskicms.org
Website: www.pulaskicms.org

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

PCMS News Has Gone Digital!

Please supply your cell number and email
address so you don't miss an issue!

The PCMS newsletter is now distributed electronically
(links sent via Text and Email). Please email the
cell phone number and email address you wish
us to use to derek@pulaskicms.org.

M1 Student Donates Stethoscope

As you may recall, in the August newsletter we reported that UAMS M1 Student Dana Abulez won the stethoscope drawing PCME had during freshman orientation. On August 16, 2021 Dr. Sara Tariq reported that Dana already a stethoscope that she could use and wanted to donate it to another M1 student. Another drawing was made from the M1 pool and the recipient of the stethoscope is Megan Hand. Congratulations Megan!





We have your back, so you can move forward.

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.

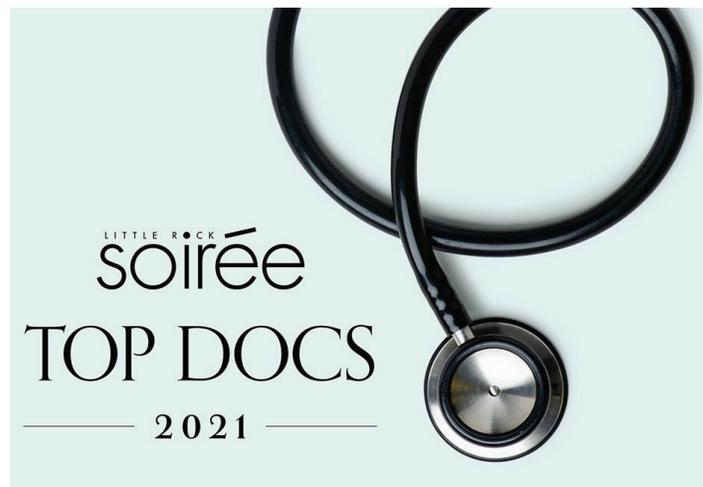
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Soiree Magazine Top Docs

In a time when your health matters more than ever, so does choosing the right doctor. *Soiree Magazine* went straight to the source, their co-workers, to find the most amazing doctors in the Little Rock Metro area. The number of our members on this list is endless, so I will not list them here. If you wish to see if you, or your doctor, is listed click the link below to see the list at the *Soiree* website.

www.littlerocksoiree.com/post/136681/soire-presents-little-rocks-top-docs-2021



New UAMS Baptist Health Cancer Center Opens in North Little Rock

The first UAMS Baptist Health Cancer Center is now open on the campus of Baptist Health Medical Center in North Little Rock, bringing the full spectrum of cancer research, diagnostic and treatment services available at UAMS' Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute to more Arkansans.

"This collaboration benefits the people of Arkansas by bringing the most advanced cancer care in the state closer to where people live," said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, UAMS chancellor and CEO of UAMS Health. "Building on our longstanding relationship, UAMS and Baptist Health are taking steps to expand the innovative and unique oncological care found at UAMS' Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute into all corners of the state."

"The opening of UAMS Baptist Health Cancer Center on our Baptist Health Medical Center North Little Rock campus is just the beginning of our cancer partnership and another example of our shared commitment to bring the best health care to the people of Arkansas," said Troy Wells, president and CEO of Baptist Health. "Uniting together

against cancer, this partnership will leverage our network of 11 hospitals and 100 clinics to bridge the gaps in state-of-the-art cancer care where patients need these services most across the state."

The UAMS Baptist Health Cancer Center in North Little Rock is staffed by a team of oncologists, nurses and radiation therapists from UAMS. The center includes two clinics, both located at 3401 Springhill Drive in the Baptist Health Springhill Medical Plaza.



E-Alert from Cross-Gunter-Witherspoon & Galchus: Arkansas Medical Marijuana and CDC Vaccine Guidance

Medical Marijuana: Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge recently issued an Opinion letter relating to the ability of employers to designate certain job positions as “Safety Sensitive” under Arkansas law. Amendment 98, which amended the Arkansas Constitution, lists some job duties as “affecting health or safety” which allows employers to restrict persons using medical marijuana from those positions. One provision has, to this point, created some confusion as written, which includes jobs that “work with confidential information or documents pertaining to criminal investigations.”

As written, some employers were not sure that they could classify an employee who worked with “confidential information” as working in a safety-sensitive position if the information did not pertain to criminal investigations. The AG Opinion specifically found that the disjunctive use of “or” does not limit the job designation to only being related to criminal investigation information. Thus, job duties working with confidential information may be properly classified as “safety sensitive” in compliance with current laws even if the information does not pertain to criminal investigations. [A copy of the AG Opinion can be found here.](#)

As a reminder, Arkansas law requires that safety-sensitive jobs be designated in writing in order to limit the hiring of medical marijuana consumers. Now is a very good time to review your drug testing, handbook, or job descriptions relating to medical marijuana rights in the workplace.

CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Update: The CDC has not previously taken a firm position with a recommendation for pregnant mothers to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Employers have been forced to decide whether to provide an accommodation from any mandatory vaccine policy for pregnant mothers even if no underlying health condition existed (triggering ADA exemption requirements). The CDC has not officially recommended vaccines for pregnant mothers, so no separate exemption is required for that classification of worker. However, employers should be careful to comply with the ADA and Pregnancy Discrimination Act whenever considering a requested accommodation by a pregnant employee.

Dr. Ashley Stoner joins Little Rock Allergy & Asthma Clinic

Ashley N. Stoner, MD, is an allergist/immunologist who specializes in the treatment of pediatric and adult allergic and immunologic disorders including asthma, food allergies, immunodeficiencies, drug allergies and allergic disorders. As a native Arkansan, she earned her undergraduate education at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and her medical education at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.

Dr. Stoner completed a three-year pediatric residency at Arkansas Children’s Hospital in Little Rock and then completed a two-year allergy/immunology fellowship at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. She also participated in one year of allergy and immunology research.

Throughout her education, Dr. Stoner has published articles and presented research at national conferences on various allergy and immunology topics. She has a passion for treating all allergic diseases.

Dr. Stoner lives in Little Rock with her husband, daughter and two dogs. She enjoys spending time on Lake Ouachita with family and friends, calling the Hogs and traveling.



Dr. Ashley N. Stoner

Arkansas Department of Health issues EEE Warning

September 3, 2021

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture has reported that positive cases of Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE) have been confirmed in Arkansas in horses at two separate locations in Pulaski County. Medical providers should be aware that the identification of this virus in horses indicates the pathogen risk is present in local mosquitoes and should consider this disease on their differential list for patients presenting with compatible symptoms during mosquito season.

EEE is an extremely rare but serious and fatal infection that can cause generalized flu-like symptoms occasionally leading to neuroinvasive disease with encephalitis and/or meningitis. The disease is spread by biting insects, primarily mosquitoes and flies that have bitten birds infected with the EEE virus (EEEV). EEEV can infect a wide range of animals other than horses, including other mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Insect control and vaccination of horses are the recommended preventative measures.

EEEV is an arbovirus (Arthropod-Borne Virus) in the genus *Alphavirus*, family *Togaviridae*, and has been circulating in the U.S. for decades, sporadically popping up in small pockets, mostly in Atlantic or Gulf Coast states during late spring to early fall. In 2019, EEE garnered national attention due to high profile outbreaks in mostly Massachusetts and Michigan, with a total of 37 human cases in 9 states including 15 deaths. EEE is highly fatal in horses, and several horses have been identified with EEE in Arkansas over the years; however, we have only reported one human case that unfortunately ended up in a fatality in 2013.

While humans can also contract the disease through biting insects, they cannot get the disease through direct contact with an infected animal, such as infected horses as they serve as "dead end hosts". Over 90% of people bitten by an infected mosquito will be asymptomatic. Less than 10% will develop systemic disease within 4 to 10 days of exposure from the biting insect.

Symptoms might include headache, chills, fever, malaise, joint and muscle pain that can last 1 to 2 weeks. In about 2-5% of symptomatic patients, this can progress to serious neuroinvasive symptoms such as vomiting, drowsiness, disorientation, seizures, coma and even death in approximately 33% of patients. Survivors typically

experience lingering and severe neurological effects due to permanent brain damage. Persons over age 50 and under age 15 seem to be at greatest risk for developing severe disease when infected with EEEV. EEEV infection is thought to confer life-long immunity against re-infection. It does not confer significant cross-immunity against other alphaviruses (e.g., western equine encephalitis virus), and it confers no cross- immunity against flaviviruses (e.g., West Nile virus) or bunyaviruses (e.g., La Crosse virus).

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) findings include neutrophil-predominant pleocytosis and elevated protein levels; glucose levels are normal. Neuroimaging shows brain lesions consistent with encephalitis, including neuronal destruction and vasculitis in the cortex, midbrain, and brain stem. There is minimal involvement of the spinal cord.

EEEV is difficult to isolate from clinical samples; almost all isolates (and PCR positive samples) have come from brain tissue or CSF. Serologic testing remains the primary method for diagnosing EEEV infection. Combined with a consistent clinical presentation in an endemic area, a rapid and accurate diagnosis of acute EEEV disease can be made by the detection of EEEV-specific IgM antibody in serum or CSF by submitting samples to a private commercial laboratory for arboviral testing. The Arkansas Public Health Laboratory (PHL) does not conduct routine testing for arboviruses; however, a positive EEEV IgM test result should be confirmed by neutralizing antibody testing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via request for submission through the AR PHL. EEE virus disease is a nationally notifiable condition and all EEEV disease cases should be reported to the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH). Reporting can assist with recognizing outbreaks of this rare disease and the institution of control measures to limit future infections. Treatment is supportive care only as there are no antivirals approved for use to treat EEE at this time.

Additional Resources:

- www.cdc.gov/easternequineencephalitis/index.html
- Garlick, J., Lee, T., Shepherd, P., Linam, W., Pastula, D. M., Weinstein, S. Schexnayder, S. M. (2016). Locally Acquired Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus Disease, Arkansas, USA. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 22(12), 2216-2217. <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2212.160844>.

Ethel Brickey Hicks Charitable Corporation Gives UAMS \$1 Million to Create College of Medicine Scholarship

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received a \$1 million gift from the Ethel Brickey Hicks Charitable Corporation to create a scholarship in the College of Medicine.

"Scholarships are crucial in our efforts to attract the very best students to UAMS and, ultimately, produce outstanding physicians for Arkansas communities where they are needed most," said Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice chancellor of UAMS and dean of the College of Medicine. "We are grateful to the Ethel Brickey Hicks Charitable Corporation and the late Mrs. Hicks for this new gift and their generous, longstanding support for medical students who aspire to practice in rural Arkansas."

The late Ethel Brickey Hicks of Knox County, Tennessee, established a trust fund in 1994 to provide tuition loans to junior and senior medical students who wish to practice medicine in rural Arkansas. The trustees of the fund then formed the Ethel Brickey Hicks Charitable Corporation to grant and administer the loans. This became the Hicks Rural Scholarship program. For each year of qualifying rural practice, the graduate's loan, up to \$19,000 a year, was deemed a scholarship. Over the years, the program was highly successful, with approximately 95% of students practicing in qualifying rural Arkansas communities.

In addition to this program, beginning in 1999 the corporation's trustees awarded \$10,000 each year for the Ethel Brickey Hicks Merit Scholarship. This was awarded to a senior UAMS medical student, voted on by their classmates as to whom they would most want to represent their profession to the public.

Through these two scholarships, the Ethel Brickey Hicks trust has awarded more than \$1.7 million to UAMS medical students over the past 27 years.

The corporation's \$1 million gift represents the transfer of trust funds to UAMS to continue Hicks' wishes to aid medical students for as long as possible. Now, the College of Medicine Scholarship Committee will determine the number of scholarships and amounts awarded each year, with preference given to medical students who pledge to practice in medically underserved communities. The new scholarship will be called the Ethel Brickey Hicks Endowed Scholarship.

The corporation credited Tom South, assistant dean for medical student admissions in the College of Medicine, with ensuring the success of the Hicks scholarships over the years. South, who has been with UAMS and the College of Medicine since 1984, is an ex-officio member on the college's Scholarship Committee and has administered and shepherded countless medical student scholarships for more than 35 years.

"To me, Tom South is a very important person to the Ethel Brickey Hicks Corporation's giving to UAMS," said trustee Janet Moore. "We often thought of making gifts to students outside Arkansas but did not because Tom made it so much easier for us to continue with our program at UAMS. He always adapted to whatever scenarios we wanted to propose. As far as I am concerned, Tom was responsible for bringing about the \$10,000 merit award that was given to students for many, many years, and he was responsible for the funds staying solely within the College of Medicine."

PCMS and Medical Exchange Board Service

If you are interested in helping to guide the future of the local medical society, or the local medical exchange, then you need to serve on the board of directors. The Pulaski County Medical Society and Pulaski County Medical Exchange board of directors would like to know of your interest in serving these organizations and shaping the services they offer in the future. If you are interested please contact Derek Rudkin at derek@pualskicms.org or at 501-687-0039. All duties and responsibilities can be discussed at your convenience.

UAMS Researcher Establishes Scholarship for Sexual Health and Gender Equity

Alexandra Marshall, Ph.D., has gifted \$50,000 to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to establish the Marshall Scholarship for Sexual Health and Gender Equity in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health.

Marshall, an associate professor in the college’s Health Behavior and Health Education Department, established the scholarship for students interested in addressing sexual health and gender disparities.

“I hope this scholarship can help fill a void, a need we have in this state to have more public health leaders who are willing and able to tackle health disparities that affect underrepresented or underserved individuals, and also conduct research that is socially driven to achieve better gender equity,” said Marshall.

The scholarship will be awarded each year to a [College of Public Health](#) student with an interest in addressing



health disparities related to sexual or reproductive health or gender identity. Recipients will receive funds for up to five concurrent semesters, with the intent to support the students through their entire education.

“I care about the state of Arkansas — about our youth and the public health needs of the state,” said Marshall. “There are myriad ways that people can do something to affect change. I feel like I’m doing what I can to try to help address those needs and priorities.”

Her previous work includes conducting statewide focus groups with parents and teens to determine their feelings about whether sex education should be included in public schools, as well as addressing the prevailing perceptions about teen pregnancy and pregnancy prevention strategies. She also continually strives to understand and prioritize the health care needs of the LGBTQ+ community so they will have access to affirming medical care throughout the state.

Marshall also donated \$25,000 to establish a dissertation research award for College of Public Health doctoral students. Recipients will receive a one-time \$1,000 award to assist with the research costs associated with completing a dissertation.

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

UAMS' Ear, Nose & Throat Department Ranked Among Top 50 in Nation for Third Consecutive Year

For the third year in a row, the ear, nose and throat (ENT) department at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has been [ranked among the top 50 nationwide](#) by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The digital news and information company that is the global leader in quality rankings also recognized [UAMS as a Best Hospital](#) for 2021-22 and named five areas as high performing: colon cancer surgery, diabetes, hip replacement, knee replacement and stroke.

UAMS' ENT program is the only one at any hospital in Arkansas to achieve national ranking status.

"It is an honor to be recognized yet again for our top-notch Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, which year after year remains dedicated to improving the lives of Arkansans by working as a team to share expertise and find innovative solutions," said UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, and CEO of UAMS Health.

During U.S. News' evaluation of more than 4,750 medical centers across the country, Ear, Nose & Throat was one of 15 medical specialties ranked. Just 175 of the evaluated hospitals made the rankings in at least one specialty.

John Dornhoffer, M.D., chair of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, applauded his ENT team.

"Our teaching lab is one of the best in the world, and I'm sure that contributes to our ranking," he said. "We cover all the subspecialties in our field, and our faculty are fellowship-trained and respected for their expertise. They publish textbooks and dozens of peer-reviewed manuscripts each year and lecture internationally. They also consistently receive high marks on patient satisfaction surveys."

In addition to the specialty ranking, UAMS was ranked No. 1 overall among hospitals in Little Rock, and its colon cancer surgery, diabetes treatment, hip replacement, knee replacement and stroke services were recognized as high performing.

"The skills and professionalism of our doctors, nurses and support staff in many disciplines is no secret at UAMS," Patterson said.

The annual Best Hospitals rankings, now in their 32nd year, are designed to assist patients and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions or for common elective procedures.



Dr. Matthew Burn

Matthew Burn, MD, Brings Orthopedic Surgery Specialty to OrthoArkansas

Matthew Burn, MD, has joined OrthoArkansas where he specializes in pediatric and adult hand, wrist, forearm and elbow surgery. Dr. Burn is Board Certified in Orthopedic Surgery, having completed a fellowship in hand and upper limb surgery. He has

advanced training in wrist arthroscopy, nerve conditions and microsurgery.

He earned his medical degree from Louisiana State University in Shreveport, La., before moving to Houston, Texas, for orthopedic surgery training at Houston Methodist Hospital. He completed a hand and upper limb fellowship at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. He returned to Houston where he trained orthopedic surgeons, and was on staff at Houston Methodist Hospital and Shriners Hospitals for Children - Houston.