



# PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY News

August 2024

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### Pulaski County Medical Society

500 S. University Ave., Suite A14  
 Little Rock, AR 72205  
 Phone: 501.687.0039  
 Email: [derek@pulaskicms.org](mailto:derek@pulaskicms.org)  
 Website: [www.pulaskicms.org](http://www.pulaskicms.org)

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

## UAMS Graduates 1,134 Health Care Professionals



On May 18, 2024 The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) conferred degrees and certificates to 1,134 students in its five colleges and graduate school.



UAMS awarded 175 degrees or certificates to students in the College of Medicine, 172 in the College of Nursing, 583 in the College of Health Professions, 78 in the College of Pharmacy, 86 in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health and 78 in the UAMS Graduate School. Thirty-eight students earned dual degrees.

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# Leveraging Your Fixed Costs

ELIZABETH A. WOODCOCK, DRPH, MBA, FACMPE, CPC; REPRINTED FROM THE SVMIC SENTINEL

Much like airplanes, medical practices carry a multitude of fixed expenses. When a plane takes off, the airline must pay for the pilots, flight attendants, mechanics, and gas, regardless of whether every seat is taken – or just a handful. The nature of bearing these fixed costs makes selling a ticket for each seat of the airplane of vital importance to the business. Airlines have gotten creative – offering tickets at various prices based on the size and position of the seat as well as selling seats at higher prices as the plane fills. Medical practices don't have the luxury of using pricing tactics to boost profits, but there are overlooked opportunities to leverage the practice's fixed costs to boost revenue without adding additional expenses.

Office space represents a major expenditure of fixed costs; most practices use this investment about 25% of the time (typically 45 operating hours, as compared to 168 hours of the week). Consider ways to use space during the 75% downtime; early morning, weekend, and evening hours add patient convenience without an additional cost outlay for rent. These non-traditional hours are often a great solution to decompress a crowded day and may even save expenses related to staff overtime. Unless your practice features a walk-in clinic, your practice controls the hours that are used (via your scheduling template). Therefore, there's no need to open every morning, evening, etc., but the additional 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. appointment slot(s) that can be added once a week will surely delight your patients, without increasing your rent expenses. Consider combining two part-time physicians to create a 12-hour, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. template that optimizes space.

In addition to expanding hours, consider how your practice utilizes space today. Divide each area into two categories: revenue-producing and non-revenue-producing. Are there opportunities to transfer the latter into revenue-producing space? This may involve migrating staff positions to work-from-home (or rotating one week in/one week out, etc., so that two positions can share a workstation); or, you may find value from reducing the size of your waiting room to create another exam room or two, which may also improve patient flow (and patient experience potentially).

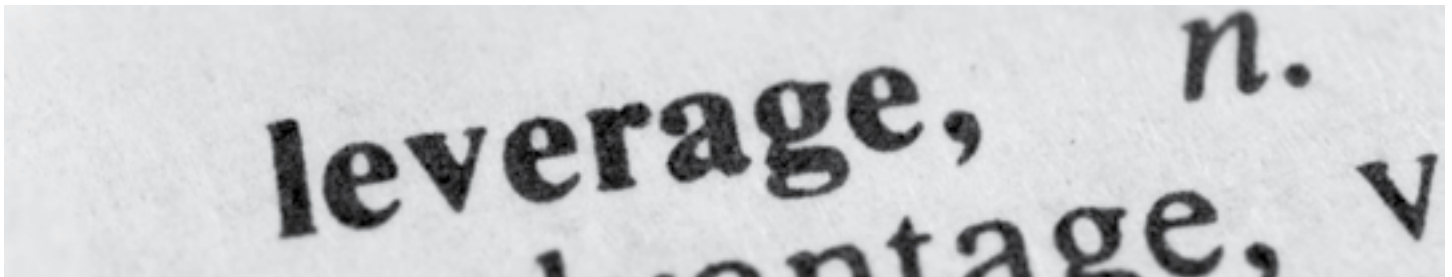
Medical practices have historically spent thousands of dollars on clipboards, paper, and printing, but the pre-visit workflow can be streamlined with readily available tools. Successful practices put these tools into the hands of their free employee – the patient! Forms are transmitted electronically in advance of the visit, reducing the time that a patient spends in the waiting room – and the staff time required to manage it. Don't limit your requests to demographic information; consider integrating your entire registration process, as well as past family social history.

Boost your patient flow efforts by improving your schedule management. Don't overbook: book strategically. There are opportunities to improve the distribution of appointments nearly every day. Consider the first appointments of the morning and afternoon, for example. If you give them to new patients, that protocol will cost you precious time. New patients naturally take longer to process through reception and result in a higher no-show rate. To start on time, commence each half-day session with an established patient. Add efforts such as identifying predictable no-shows through an advance review of tomorrow's schedule, convert cancelled slots through an automated waitlist function, and avoid booking routine follow-up visits on the day of your highest demand (e.g., Mondays). There are so many tips and tricks to improve the management of the schedule; engage with the experts on your team – your schedulers – to glean their ideas on improvement opportunities.

Your team of employees represents the single largest category of costs, but focusing solely on expenses disguises the opportunity to leverage this amazing resource. Consider the services that your team can perform – principal care management (PCM), for example, offers an often-overlooked opportunity to code and bill for the amazing work performed by your clinical team. (There are a host of "care management" CPT codes that are under used.) Find more information here and here. CPT 99211, often referred to as the code for a "nurse visit" and confirmed by the description: "may not require the presence of a physician or other qualified health care professional," is rarely used. There is a medley of overlooked coding opportunities; determine if any may work for your practice.

Don't reinvent the wheel; network with stakeholders to identify opportunities. Connect with your colleagues around the region; what services are they offering? Contact the practice management advisors employed by your specialty society: what advice might they have to improve your practice? Reach out to the SVMIC team by contacting Sharon Theriot using the information below. Commit a few hours to running a Web search on your specialty, along with terms like "revenue," "business," and "management."

When an airplane takes off, there's no turning around to accommodate more passengers – or reduce the costs associated with getting the plane in the sky. There's no "turning around" at the end of the day for a medical practice either, so the time is now to consider opportunities to leverage your investment into fixed costs.



## UAMS Graduates 1,134 Health Care Professionals

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Degrees and certificates conferred at this year's commencement ceremony included doctor of philosophy; doctor of medicine; doctor of pharmacy; doctor of nursing practice; master of science; master of nursing science; bachelor of science in nursing; doctor of public health; master of public health; master of

health administration; master of science in health care data analytics; postbaccalaureate certificate in public health; and a variety of allied health disciplines, including doctor of audiology, doctor of physical therapy, master of physician assistant studies, master of science and bachelor of science.

## *U.S. News Names UAMS a Best Medical School for Primary Care, Rural Practice*

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) continues to climb *U.S. News & World Report's* list of Best Medical Schools.

The magazine's annual ranking of medical and osteopathic schools across the country was released July 23<sup>rd</sup>, showing that for 2024, UAMS ranked fourth nationally for graduates going into primary care, ninth for the most graduates practicing in health professional shortage areas and 11<sup>th</sup> nationally for graduates practicing in rural areas.

UAMS was the only medical or osteopathic school in Arkansas to be recognized.

"We are proud to be recognized again as a national leader in educating and training graduates who go on to practice primary care and in rural areas," said Steven A. Webber, M.D., executive vice chancellor of UAMS and dean of the College of Medicine. "We are working hard to generate more primary care physicians for communities across our state, to ensure all Arkansans have access to high-quality primary care. The latest Best Medical Schools rankings demonstrate our progress and success in this crucial area."

The UAMS College of Medicine's primary care ranking skyrocketed this year from the 2023 rankings, when it earned 17<sup>th</sup> place, which was an improvement from 36<sup>th</sup> place in the 2022 rankings. The medical school's ranking for graduates practicing in rural areas also went up this year from the 2023 rankings, when it placed 18<sup>th</sup>. In the 2022 Best Medical School rankings, UAMS was ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in practicing in rural areas.

*U.S. News* listed UAMS as a Tier 1 medical school in primary care, based on an evaluation of data collected from 99 medical and osteopathic schools across the country that were fully accredited in 2024 by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or the American Osteopathic Association.

*U.S. News* grouped the schools into four evaluative tiers this year, based on each school's overall score, with Tier 1 schools being the highest performing. Tier 1 included schools with overall scores of 85-99, while Tier 2 schools had overall scores of 50 to 84. Schools in the last two tiers had overall scores ranging from 15-49 and 1-14.

*U.S. News* said it based the results on surveys it conducted in the winter of 2023-2024. It evaluated schools on faculty resources and the academic achievements of entering students. For primary care rankings, it also considered the proportion of graduates practicing in primary care specialties: family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, geriatrics, general practice or internal medicine pediatrics.

In June, after the initial submission period, schools were provided a second look at key data used in the computations, and some schools provided corrections.

Schools that didn't report survey data to *U.S. News* in the fall of 2023 and early 2024, or had only provisional, preliminary or pre-accreditation status as of mid-winter, were unranked.

The full list of medical school rankings can be found at [usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools](https://usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools).



# Baptist Health Earns 2024 Great Place To Work Certification™



Baptist Health is proud to be Certified™ by Great Place To Work®. The prestigious award is based entirely on what current employees say about their experience working at Arkansas’ most comprehensive health care organization. This year, 74% of employees said it’s a Great Place To Work – 17 points higher than the average U.S. company.

“We are thrilled to become certified by Great Place To Work,” said Baptist Health President and CEO Troy Wells. “This recognition is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our exceptional team members. Being recognized not only reflects Baptist Health’s commitment to our employees, but also underscores our promise to provide quality, compassionate care to the communities we serve.”

Great Place To Work® is the global authority on workplace culture, employee experience, and the leadership behaviors proven to deliver market-leading revenue, employee retention and increased innovation.

“Great Place To Work Certification is a highly coveted achievement that requires consistent and intentional dedication to the overall employee experience,” says Sarah Lewis-Kulin, the Vice President of Global Recognition at Great Place To Work. She emphasizes that Certification is the sole official recognition earned by the real-time feedback of employees regarding their company culture. “By successfully earning this recognition, it is evident that Baptist Health stands out as one of the top companies to work for, providing a great workplace environment for its employees.”


Baptist Health maintains a number of benefits to help parents and families, including on-site child care, tuition assistance, loan forgiveness, a credit union, an employee food pantry and an abundance of company-provided benefits and discounts.

In addition, the healing ministry has a number of ongoing initiatives that are dedicated to

celebrating Baptist Health’s diverse workforce. An annual survey asks employees for valuable feedback, and a diversity and inclusion committee of employees meets monthly to assess this area. System leaders are trained in unconscious bias and inclusive leadership to further foster an inclusive work environment.

Baptist Health also offers many community programs such as free immunizations, cooking events, and classes for new and expecting parents.

According to [Great Place To Work research](#), job seekers are 4.5 times more likely to find a great boss at a Certified great workplace. Additionally, employees at Certified workplaces are 93% more likely to look forward to coming to work, and are twice as likely to be paid fairly, earn a fair share of the company’s profits and have a fair chance at promotion.

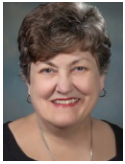



**Join us for a Symposium:**  
**Diabetes and Endocrinology 2024**  
**FREE CMEs offered for CHI St. Vincent physicians & providers**

**Friday, September 6 | 8am - 4pm**



Keynote Speaker  
Dr. Qi Sun from  
Harvard University




Keynote Speaker  
Dr. Janet McGill from  
Washington University  
School of Medicine

**Other topics include:** GLP-1 or SGLT2, which to pick?, Cholesterol Control from Nature, Osteoporosis Diagnosis and Management in 2024, Decode CGM, Plant Based Diets for Weight Loss and many more!

A great time to network with our keynote speakers and our local specialists!

\*\*CME/CE-Accredited Symposium made possible by Creighton University

**In-Person Meeting Location**  
 CHI St. Vincent Infirmary  
 Education Center Entrance  
 Main Auditorium  
 2 St. Vincent Circle, Little Rock 72205



**← Scan here to register today!**

## CARTI Expands Radiation Oncology Team

**Dr. Scott Cordova Brings Specialty in High Dose Rate Brachytherapy**



*Dr. J. Scott Cordova*

In May, CARTI welcomed [J. Scott Cordova, M.D., Ph.D.](#), to its world-class radiation oncology team. Now seeing patients at the CARTI Cancer Center in Little Rock, Cordova specializes in high dose rate (HDR) brachytherapy, a minimally invasive method of radiation treatment that places radioactive sources close to or within tumors.

“At CARTI, we are committed to harnessing advanced treatments to improve patients’ outcomes and quality of life,” said Matthew Hardee, M.D., Ph.D., medical director of radiation oncology. “With his experience delivering HDR brachytherapy, including for gynecologic cancers, Dr. Cordova is a go-to, trusted resource for our patients and families.”

Before joining CARTI, Cordova completed his residency in radiation oncology at Barnes-Jewish Hospital at the Washington University Medical Center in St. Louis and an internship at Wellstar Kennestone Regional Hospital in Marietta, Georgia. He received his medical degree from Emory University School of Medicine and his Ph.D. in molecular and systems pharmacology from Laney Graduate School at Emory University. He graduated with honors from the University of Central Arkansas with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry.

Dr. Cordova is board-certified by the American Board of Radiology and is a member of the American Brachytherapy Society, American College of Radiation Oncology, American Radium Society, American Society for Radiation Oncology and Radiation Research Society.

## Electrophysiologist Dr. Bilal Saqi Joins CHI St. Vincent Heart Clinic in North Little Rock



*Dr. Bilal Saqi*

[CHI St. Vincent](#), a leading regional health network serving Central and Southwest Arkansas, is pleased to announce that electrophysiologist Dr. Bilal Saqi has joined the team of specialists at the [CHI St. Vincent Heart Clinic in North Little Rock](#).

Saqi joins CHI St. Vincent from the University of Colorado Anschutz

Medical Campus in Aurora, Colorado, where he completed his electrophysiology fellowship. Previously, he completed a cardiology fellowship at Lehigh Valley Health Network/University of South Florida College of Medicine. His extensive experience includes an internal medicine residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio.

A graduate of Army Medical College, National University of Sciences & Technology in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Saqi also served as a clinical instructor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Saqi is board-certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in Cardiovascular Disease, the National Board of Echocardiography and the American Board of Internal Medicine. He has authored multiple articles in research publications, including the *Journal of Cardiac Electrophysiology* and the *Heart Rhythm Journal*.

To schedule an appointment with Saqi, call (501) 758-5133. The CHI St. Vincent Heart Clinic is located at 4000 Richards Road in North Little Rock

## Endocrinologist, Obesity Medicine Specialist Dr. Dinesh Edem Joins CHI St. Vincent



*Dr. Dinesh Edem*

[CHI St. Vincent](#), a leading regional health network serving Central and Southwest Arkansas, announces that endocrinologist and obesity medicine specialist [Dr. Dinesh Edem](#) has joined the CHI St. Vincent Diabetes and Endocrinology Clinic in Little Rock. Edem specializes in endocrinology and non-surgical weight loss.

Before joining CHI St. Vincent, Edem was the medical weight management program director and an assistant professor of endocrinology and metabolism at a state healthcare system. He also served as an adjunct assistant professor of medicine and endocrinology at the Indiana University School of Medicine.

Edem is a frequent guest lecturer across the country on obesity management and diabetes. His depth of expertise has allowed him to serve on the editorial boards of multiple medical journals and endocrinology publications. Edem is also a member of The Obesity Society, the Obesity Medicine Association, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, the American Medical Association, the Endocrine Society, and the American College of Physicians.

Edem graduated from Topiwala National Medical College in India. He completed his internal medicine residency at Johns Hopkins University and Sinai Hospital of Baltimore. He is board-certified with the American Board of Obesity Medicine; the American Board of Internal Medicine, where he received his certification in endocrinology; and the American Board of Internal Medicine, where he received his certification in internal medicine.

The CHI St. Vincent Diabetes and Endocrinology Clinic is located at the Little Rock Diagnostic Center at 10001 Lile Drive in Little Rock

## Oncologist Dr. Abhijit Godbole Joins CHI St. Vincent Cancer Center



*Dr. Abhijit Godbole*

[CHI St. Vincent](#), a leading regional health network serving Central and Southwest Arkansas, announces that oncologist [Dr. Abhijit Godbole](#) has joined the team of specialists at the CHI St. Vincent Cancer Center in Little Rock. Godbole began seeing patients on June 17.

Godbole joins CHI St. Vincent from Jefferson Regional Medical Center in Pine Bluff, where he served as a hematologist-oncologist. Before that, he was an assistant professor of hematology and oncology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. His extensive experience includes working as an attending hospital physician at Lehigh Valley Health Network in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

A graduate of B.J. Medical College in Pune, India, Godbole received his Ph.D. in molecular medicine from the University of Maryland. He also held the role of a post-doctoral research associate at Thomas Jefferson University in Maryland. He completed his residency in internal medicine at St. Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx, New York, and his hematology-oncology fellowship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Godbole is board-certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Society of Hematology, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology. He has served on multiple editorial boards, including the American Journal of Cancer Case Reports and the American Journal of Cancer Therapy and Pharmacology. He is a member of the American Association for Cancer Research, the American College of Physicians, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the American Society of Hematology.

The CHI St. Vincent Cancer Center is located at 10001 Lile Drive in Little Rock.

## UAMS First in Nation to Offer Groundbreaking Therapy for Treatment-Resistant Depression

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) is the first medical facility in the United States to provide an innovative therapeutic treatment for major depressive disorder (MDD).

The SAINT® neuromodulation system, developed by Magnus Medical, Inc., has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat adults with depression who have not achieved improvement in their condition from the use of antidepressant medications. SAINT works by leveraging structural and functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans to inform a proprietary algorithm that pinpoints the optimal anatomical target for precise neurostimulation in individuals with major depression.

The treatment is performed on an accelerated, five-day timeline, reducing the patient's treatment time from weeks to days. In previous clinical trials, treatment with SAINT for MDD resulted in a significant reduction in depressive symptoms at four weeks post-treatment following the five-day treatment protocol. Currently, SAINT can only be provided to patients who are being treated as inpatients.

"We are thrilled to be the first site in the nation to offer the breakthrough SAINT neuromodulation system for individuals suffering from depression, and I am very optimistic that this new approach will change people's lives," said Laura B. Dunn, M.D., chair of the Department of Psychiatry and director of the Psychiatric Research Institute at UAMS.

"With our interventional psychiatry program, the Helen L. Porter and James T. Dyke Brain Imaging Research Center, and our inpatient and outpatient treatment programs all housed under one roof, our teams of mental health experts will work seamlessly together to implement the SAINT protocol, tailored to each patient's individual needs," she added. "We are excited to bring the future of brain science directly to the people of Arkansas and the entire region."

Patients in the SAINT treatment protocol undergo an MRI scan in the Brain Imaging Research Center, which takes approximately 45 minutes, to pinpoint the optimal anatomical target for precise transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). The TMS treatment consists of 10 sessions per day for five consecutive days. Each session includes 10 minutes of stimulation followed by a 50-minute rest period.

"The innovative SAINT protocol provides neuroscience-based, targeted, personalized, noninvasive rapid treatment for patients with one of the most disabling psychiatric conditions — major depression. At the Psychiatric Research Institute, our mission is to provide outstanding, expert-driven psychiatric care for our patients," said Dunn.

In addition to the new SAINT neuromodulation system, PRI's Interventional Psychiatry program offers several treatment options for individuals whose depression has not responded to traditional medication- and psychotherapy-based treatments. These treatments include Spravato (intranasal ketamine), intravenous ketamine, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), and now accelerated transcranial magnetic stimulation using the SAINT neuromodulation system.

"Because each individual's needs are different, new patients will be seen for a consultation appointment with the Interventional Psychiatry program at PRI," said Amy Grooms, M.D., a psychiatrist with the Interventional Psychiatry program. "During that appointment, the patient will receive an in-depth psychiatric evaluation with one of our interventional psychiatrists, who specialize in the care of patients suffering from treatment-resistant depression."

Individuals who are interested in learning more should contact the Interventional Psychiatry Program at PRI, by visiting their website at: [psychiatry.uams.edu/clinical-care/interventional-psychiatry/](https://psychiatry.uams.edu/clinical-care/interventional-psychiatry/) or by calling (501) 526-8650.



## Baptist Health/UAMS Thoracic Surgery Opens New Location



Baptist Health/UAMS Thoracic Surgery is now located within UAMS Baptist Health Cancer Clinic-Little Rock on the Baptist Health campus, off Interstate 630. The clinic is at the Hickingbotham Outpatient Center, 9500 Kanis Road, Suite 500.

Baptist Health/UAMS Thoracic Surgery is supported by Arkansas' only group of fellowship-trained, dedicated general thoracic surgeons. They work closely with the medical oncologists in the new clinic.

**Katy Marino, MD**, is a thoracic surgeon specializing in minimally invasive surgery of the chest. Dr. Marino received her medical degree from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Shreveport. She is board certified by the American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

**Jason Muesse, MD**, specializes in the surgical treatment of diseases involving the chest including the lungs, esophagus and chest wall. Dr. Muesse obtained his medical degree at Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine in College Station and Temple,

Texas. He is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

**Matthew Steliga, MD**, specializes in thoracic oncology with an emphasis on lung cancer, esophageal cancer and other tumors of the chest and is experienced in minimally invasive thoracic surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

**Nicholas Tingquist, MD**, specializes in minimally invasive laparoscopic and thoracoscopic procedures as well as robotic chest surgery. Dr. Tingquist earned his medical degree and completed his residency in general surgery at UAMS and completed a cardiothoracic surgery fellowship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Savanna Cathey, PA**, received her education through the UAMS Physician Assistant Program. She is certified by the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants and through the Arkansas State Medical Board.