



PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY News

November 2021

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

Important Information for the Medical Exchange Meeting on December 2nd

This will serve as a notice of an additional agenda item for the upcoming members meeting of the Medical Exchange on Thursday, December 2, 2021. The original items were published in the October newsletter. If

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Announcing

The Pulaski County Medical Society
and Pulaski County Medical Exchange

2021
Annual Membership Meeting

Thursday, December 2, 2021 • 6:00 PM

Virtual via Zoom

Email derek@pulaskicms.org to register
for this free on-line event



*Honoring the PCMS President's Award
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We have your back, so you can move forward.

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Michael Thomsen, Ph.D., Invested in Inaugural Governor Sidney S. McMath Endowed Chair in Obesity Prevention

Michael Thomsen, Ph.D., professor in the Health Policy and Management Department in the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, was invested Oct. 6 in the inaugural Governor Sidney S. McMath Endowed Chair in Obesity Prevention.

"To be entrusted with this endowment is the honor of my career," said Thomsen. "But it is more than that, and it is bigger than me. It is a gift that amplifies our ability to work together as an institution, and it is a responsibility to give back and make a difference for good in the lives of Arkansans."

Thomsen joined UAMS in 2021 as a professor and director of the Center for the Study of Obesity in the UAMS College of Public Health. Thomsen's research emphasizes the interface between the food distribution system and human health. His work has improved understanding of environmental contributors to excess weight gain among Arkansas children and has helped identify student populations at high risk for childhood obesity. He is also studying the role of nutrition programs in addressing food insecurity and improving diet and health outcomes.

"I'd like to extend my congratulations to Dr. Thomsen for his accomplishments, which have merited this honor," said Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D., senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, provost and chief strategy officer. "And I'd like to offer a special thanks to those here today that made this chair a reality."

The Governor Sidney S. McMath professorship was created from settlement funds obtained by the McMath Woods Law Firm in a health-related, multistate lawsuit. McMath, governor of Arkansas from 1949 to 1953, is viewed by many as father of the modern-day UAMS because of his advocacy of a 2-cent cigarette tax to build University Hospital, now UAMS Medical Center, and to move the campus from MacArthur Park to its West Markham site.

The chair was established with a \$1 million donation from the McMath Woods Law Firm to foster and enhance



Michael Thomsen, Ph.D.

research related to obesity, to contribute to the development of the Center for the Study of Obesity in the UAMS College of Public Health, and to provide leadership for the development of a plan to address Arkansas' major nutrition and diet-related problems.

McMath, who died in 2003, was a native of Columbia County, a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and a decorated veteran of the Pacific theater in World War II. He would become a leading figure in the Southern reform movement, making major contributions in race relations, labor relations, rural electrification and other matters that helped Arkansans.

"Governor McMath understood how issues like a lack of electricity were limiting people's lives," said Thomsen. "He developed and led successful efforts to connect the citizens of our state to a broader world of opportunity. As an attorney, he advocated for laws that addressed inequity, and he used the law to benefit those who needed and deserved help."

The former governor's efforts were crucial to the construction of the UAMS campus and the neighboring State Hospital, as well as the establishment of the UAMS Department of Psychiatry.

"The Governor Sidney S. McMath Chair in Obesity Prevention is a fitting tribute to his legacy," said Mark Williams, Ph.D., dean of the College of Public Health. "Obesity is one of, if not the most important chronic condition in Arkansas. We expect Dr. Thomsen will be an exemplary scientific leader at UAMS and in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, and throughout the state of Arkansas."

In addition to the honor of being named chair holder, Thomsen received a commemorative medallion and an inscribed wooden chair.

Thomsen will develop active research programs related to obesity prevention, collaborate with researchers across UAMS on obesity-related work and contribute to the college's diverse doctoral and postdoctoral programs.

UAMS Celebrates Completion of New, \$50 Million Electrical Power Plant at Little Rock Campus

On October 14th the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) celebrated the completion of a new \$50 million electrical power plant on the east side of its Little Rock campus.

The plant is a key component of a \$150 million energy project that is expected to be finished in late 2022 and result in an estimated \$4.8 million in annual savings. The project is being paid for by a bond issue approved in 2019 by the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees.

Standing behind the ribbon as it was cut were Board of Trustees members; local dignitaries; UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA; and UAMS officials involved in the planning and oversight of the project.

"Almost two years ago, many of us here were on this site to mark the start of construction," Patterson said. "Today we celebrate its early completion. It is estimated that UAMS will see \$4.8 million in savings annually from it. Finishing the power plant early means we can start saving earlier, which allows us to save even more. This project is proof of how seriously the university takes its responsibility to be good stewards of the public's dollars."

In addition to constructing the new power plant, the energy project includes the replacement of the Barton Building exterior and infrastructure as well as an upgrade to campus building control systems, interior and exterior

lighting, electrical and mechanical systems. The new electrical generator plant will provide 100% back-up power for the UAMS campus, including the cooling system and research facilities. Currently, the UAMS West Central Energy Plant provides backup power for UAMS inpatient facilities.

The overall energy project is enabling UAMS to address \$101 million in maintenance needs and energy efficiency measures. Once completed, UAMS' energy efficiency ranking will be in the top 1% of all academic medical centers in the United States.

The project also included the rerouting and expansion of Pine Street and the ultimate partial closure of Cedar Street in spring 2022. Much of the new street work is done. The city of Little Rock contributed \$4.6 million to the projected \$10 million cost of relocation and other street improvements.

"The successful conclusion of this phase of the energy project is tangible evidence of what the city of Little Rock and UAMS has done, is doing and will continue to do together," said Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. "The challenges we both have faced during the pandemic only have strengthened our ties. We are glad today to join with you in celebrating our collaboration and what it has accomplished."

Baptist Health Therapy Center-North Little Rock Moves To New Location on McCain Boulevard

Baptist Health Therapy Center-North Little Rock is now seeing patients at its new location 2601 McCain Blvd., Suite A, in North Little Rock. This location was formerly Pier 1 Imports.

The outpatient therapy center at Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock provides therapy for orthopedic, neurologic and other medical conditions. Specialized

treatments include hand therapy, stroke rehabilitation, and post joint replacement rehabilitation.

Additionally, pelvic health physical therapy is available to those who suffer from general pelvic pain, pain with intercourse, urinary incontinence, and peripartum care. A Spanish-speaking physical therapist is also on site at the clinic.

New Lung Biopsy Robot at UAMS Detects Early-Stage Cancer in Far Reaches of Lung

Doctors at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) recently activated the first lung biopsy robot in Arkansas. The robot allows doctors to discover and biopsy previously undetectable cancerous nodules in the far reaches of the lungs.

"This enables us to visualize and precisely biopsy lung nodules so we can catch lung cancer in its early stages and increase survival rates," said Nikhil Meena, M.D., an interventional pulmonologist and associate professor in the UAMS College of Medicine Department of Internal Medicine.

The Ion Endoluminal Robotic Bronchoscopy System, made by Intuitive, was used at UAMS for the first time on Sept. 14, enabling Meena to find early cancerous nodules in the lungs of two patients.

Meena said the first patient had a nodule that earlier technology didn't allow to be biopsied adequately. The second patient had multiple small nodules, two of which were found to be cancerous.

The robotic system employs groundbreaking technology allowing physicians to perform minimally invasive peripheral lung biopsies. The technology includes an ultra-thin, easily maneuverable catheter that enters the body through a natural opening, like the mouth, and can move 180 degrees in all directions. With this system,

doctors can navigate through very small airways to reach any airway segment within the lung, while patients are under general anesthesia. The flexible biopsy needle can also pass through very tight bends via the catheter to collect tissue in all 18 segments of the lung.

About 70% of nodules reside in the farthest reaches of the lung.

"With this technology, we would be able to sample, in the right context, the nodules that previously would have just been watched until they were big enough to biopsy," Meena said. "And cancer can be unpredictable. Sometimes it can grow exponentially during the surveillance time and develop to a higher stage that is more difficult to treat."

"The size and location are the main obstacles for sampling with the older technique," he said. "We simply couldn't get to the nodules with surety. And then there was no way to pinpoint the location so we could find it again."

Meena said the first two uses of the machine "went very well. It was incredible to drive down the airways you could previously only look at from afar, and park the biopsy needle right at the doorstep of the nodule, if you will."

Landon Ricker, a spokesman for Intuitive, said, "We are excited by the outcomes of these first two procedures."

Important Information for the Medical Exchange Meeting

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you did not read that you can see it at https://www.pulaskicms.org/site/assets/files/1017/114205_pcms_oct21_news_proof5.pdf

The additional item concerns the sale of all assets of the Pulaski County Medical Exchange to MedCom Telephone Answering Services. There are many details in the proposal from MedCom so a town-hall zoom meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 30th at 6:00 pm to answer any questions you may have about the details of

the proposal and how it will affect all current customers. Myself and the President of MedCom will be on the call to answer any questions you may have prior to the actual vote on December 2nd.

If you wish to participate, please send your email address to Derek Rudkin at derek@pulaskicms.org. If you cannot be involved in the town hall meeting, you can email your questions to Derek Rudkin at the email address above or call him at 501-687-0039.

UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health Receives \$156,800 Grant from U.S. Department of Labor Funds Will Train 550 Employers and Workers in Pandemic Preparedness

The Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) received a one-year grant for \$156,800 to provide infectious disease pandemic preparedness training to 550 employers and workers across the state.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced the grant as part of more than \$11.6 million in grants to 93 nonprofit organizations to fund education and training on hazard recognition and prevention.

Derived from the Susan Harwood Workplace Safety and Health Training program, the OSHA grants are in the Targeted Topic Training, Training and Educational Materials Development and Capacity Building categories. These grants are a critical part of OSHA's effort to educate workers and assist employers nationwide.

"This is an important grant for the college, as it is an affirmation that the health of Arkansas' workforce during a pandemic is vital to the economic well-being of the state," said College of Public Health Dean Mark Williams, Ph.D.

Through the college's Office of Professional Development and Program Evaluation, the College of Public Health will

provide up to six hours of infectious disease pandemic preparedness training to employers and workers in the general and construction industries, focusing on small businesses that may not have the resources to train and develop pandemic programs. UAMS recently created the office to elevate public health focus, knowledge and practice by providing public health training, professional development, outreach, mentoring and consultation.

Called *The Next Normal: Preparing Today's Workplace for Tomorrow's Pandemic*, the training will be designed to increase awareness of signs and symptoms of known infectious diseases, modes of transmission, methods for control and elimination, the use of personal protective equipment and other control methods.

Specifically, the training will target small businesses that employ temporary, youth and limited-English proficiency workers. Training materials and sessions will be offered in both English and Spanish.

The College of Public Health will partner with the Northwest Arkansas Council and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield to help advertise the trainings.

NIH Awards \$13.8 Million to Test UAMS-Discovered Drug for Methamphetamine Use Disorder Treatment Funding Follows \$8.1 Million Award in 2020

A drug discovered at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to counter the effects of methamphetamine will be tested in a phase 2 clinical trial as the only potential treatment of its kind for methamphetamine use disorder.

The study is led by UAMS startup biopharmaceutical company InterveXion Therapeutics LLC and is funded by a three-year, \$13.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

The drug, IXT-m200, could be the first monoclonal antibody treatment for methamphetamine use disorder and overdose. It received the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration (FDA) Fast Track Designation in 2016 for treatment of methamphetamine use disorder. FDA Fast Track Designation facilitates the development and speeds the review of drugs to treat serious conditions and fill an unmet medical need.

"There is an urgent need for an effective treatment, and we're excited to begin this next phase of testing," said Brooks Gentry, M.D., one of the grant's principal investigators and a professor in the UAMS College of Medicine departments of Anesthesiology and Pharmacology and Toxicology. "Because there are no medications out there to treat meth use disorder or

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UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation Receives \$982,500 Grant from Federal Communications Commission

Funds Will Provide 34 Rural Clinics, Hospitals with New Equipment

The [UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation](#) received a one-year grant for \$982,589 to facilitate digital health services for 34 hospitals and clinics in rural communities throughout Arkansas and the greater Memphis area.

Part of its COVID-19 Telehealth Program, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded the grant for the purchase of new digital health equipment for emergency departments, labor and delivery units and clinical spaces in medically underserved health care facilities.

The digital health technology will connect rural providers with remote specialists through private, real-time virtual consultations for triage, diagnosis and treatment recommendations. The remote providers will have the ability to assess conditions dealing with COVID-19, strokes, hand and burn trauma, high-risk pregnancy and behavioral health. The 34 partner sites will also have access to [UAMS HealthNow](#) virtual urgent care.

"Using updated digital health equipment is essential in providing Arkansans with optimal quality health care through virtual consults," said [Joseph Sanford, M.D.](#), institute director.

The majority of the 34 partner sites are located in communities with a shortage of providers, nurses and health care facilities. Through the [UAMS e-Link](#) virtual platform, [UAMS surpassed 100,000 digital health visits](#) in April to reach patients from all corners of the state by expanding the network and range of quality health care, in addition to providing digital health services for rural health care facilities.

"McGehee Hospital's reliance on telemedicine has accelerated quickly during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Terry L. Amstutz, CEO of McGehee Hospital – one of the 34 partner sites. "For years, UAMS has provided the equipment and the physician specialists for strokes, neurology, cardiology and more.

"With this timely upgrade, the staff at McGehee Hospital feel fortunate to improve our equipment and our relationship with UAMS to provide enhanced patient access for our community," he added.

Similar to the [grant UAMS received from the FCC in June 2020](#), this grant will also provide reimbursement for telecommunications services, information services and connected devices necessary to enable digital health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NIH Awards \$13.8 Million to Test UAMS-Discovered Drug...

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overdose, we hope the FDA Fast Track Designation will help us move a little more quickly."

Gentry, the chief medical officer for InterveXion, noted that the number of people in the United States with methamphetamine use disorder increased by 62% between 2015 and 2019, and overdose deaths increased by 43%.

UAMS, which has partial ownership of InterveXion, will receive a sub-award of \$388,876 to support the clinical trial, named the OUTLAST trial.

A monoclonal antibody is a molecule designed in a lab to aid the immune system attack on other cells or molecules.

IXT-m200 has demonstrated the potential to significantly reduce or prevent the euphoric rush that drug users crave by keeping methamphetamine in the bloodstream and out of the brain, where the drug has its most damaging effects.

The funding follows a 2020 NIH/NIDA grant of \$8.1 million to study the same drug as a treatment for methamphetamine overdose. That phase 2 clinical trial is called METH-OD and included a sub-award to UAMS of \$408,101. Gentry is one of the principal investigators on that grant award, along with Misty Stevens, Ph.D., MBA. The UAMS site principal investigator on the METH-OD study is Michael Wilson, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor in the departments of Psychiatry and Emergency Medicine. Three other hospitals in New Mexico and Washington are also study centers for the METH-OD clinical trial.

Carol Silverstrom Trust Gives Over \$1 Million to Support Nursing, Cancer Programs at UAMS

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received gifts totaling more than \$1 million from the Carol Silverstrom Trust to support the highest priorities of the UAMS College of Nursing and the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.

Silverstrom, who died in April, named UAMS as a beneficiary of her trust.

“We are humbled by the generosity of Carol Silverstrom’s gift to the College of Nursing,” said Dean Patricia Cowan, Ph.D., RN. “These funds will be used to establish a professorship in nursing to support nursing innovators in teaching and practice.”

“This generous gift from the Silverstrom Trust is so meaningful and timely as we pursue National Cancer Institute Designation,” said Michael J. Birrer, M.D.,

Ph.D., Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute director and UAMS vice chancellor. “We will put these funds to immediate use in support of our growing clinical trial, research and outreach efforts.”

Silverstrom was a longtime employee of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Arkansas District Office in Little Rock. She retired in 2017 after 37 years with the agency and more than 40 years with the federal government.

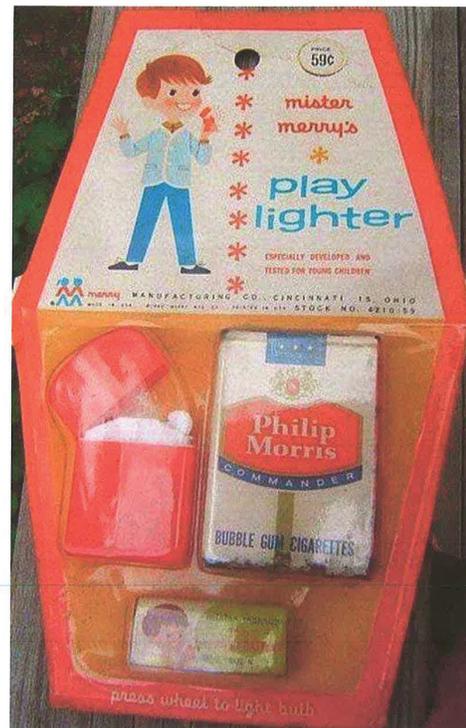
In her spare time, Silverstrom volunteered as an advocate for nursing home residents. She also was passionate about enabling more potential nurses to attend nursing school.

UAMS will also recognize Silverstrom as a member of the 1879 Society, which recognizes philanthropists who have made transformative bequests to the university.

How Times Have Changed in Regards to Smoking



Philip Morris cigarette ad in 1952.



Mister Merry's play lighter toy with bubble gum cigarettes from the 1960's