



**ARKANSAS TOBACCO  
SETTLEMENT COMMISSION**

**July-September 2023  
QUARTERLY  
REPORT**

**Report presented to**

Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission  
101 East Capitol Avenue, Suite 108  
Little Rock, AR 72201

**Report presented by**

Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Evaluation Team  
University of Central Arkansas  
201 Donaghey Avenue, Conway, AR 72035

***February 2024***

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# ABOUT THE ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION



## ATSC Mission

The mission of the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission is to provide oversight and assessment of the performance of the seven programs funded by the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act of 2000. The Act mandates the distribution of Master Settlement Agreement funds. The seven health programs that receive funding work to enhance the health and well-being of Arkansans through various projects, programs, and outreach.

## Funded Programs



**Arkansas Biosciences Institute**  
Robert McGehee, Jr., PhD, Director  
Jimie Jarry, Program Coordinator

**ABI Goal:** To develop new tobacco-related medical and agricultural research initiatives to improve the access to new technologies, improve the health of Arkansans, and stabilize the economic security of Arkansas.



**UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health**  
Mark Williams, PhD, Dean  
Liz Gates, JD, MPH, Assistant Dean for Planning and Policy

**COPH Goal:** To improve the health and promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Arkansas through education, research, and service.



**Arkansas Minority Health Initiative**  
Kenya Eddings, MPH, Director

**MHI Goal:** To improve healthcare systems in Arkansas and access to healthcare delivery systems, thereby resolving critical deficiencies that negatively impact the health of the citizens of the state.



**Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program**  
Lana "Joy" Gray, Branch Chief

**TPCP Goal:** To reduce morbidity and death associated with tobacco use by preventing initiation of tobacco/nicotine products and providing cessation services/resources to Arkansans who want to quit using tobacco.



Tobacco Settlement  
Medicaid Expansion

**Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program**  
Mary Franklin, Director, Department of Human Services Division of County Operations

**TS-MEP Goal:** To expand access to healthcare through targeted Medicaid expansions, thereby improving the health of eligible Arkansans.



**UAMS Centers on Aging**  
AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy, PhD, GNP-BC, Director

**UAMS-COA Goal:** To improve the health of older Arkansans through interdisciplinary geriatric care and innovative education programs and to influence health policy affecting older adults.



**UAMS East Regional Campus**  
Stephanie Loveless, MPH, Director

**UAMS East Goal:** To recruit and retain healthcare professionals and to provide community-based healthcare and education to improve the health of the people residing in the Delta region.



# ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION AND STAFF

**Andrea Allen, Commission Chair**

Executive Director, A-State Delta Center for Economic Development  
Governor Appointee

**Jennifer Fowler, Commissioner**

Director, Arkansas NSF EPSCoR at Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC)  
AEDC Permanent Designee

**Jerri Clark, Commissioner**

Director of School Health Services, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)  
ADE Permanent Designee

**Mary Franklin, Commissioner**

Director of Divisions of County Operations, Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS)  
DHS Permanent Designee

**Nick Fuller, Commissioner**

Deputy Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)  
ADHE Permanent Designee

**Ken Knecht, MD, Commissioner**

Physician, Arkansas Children's Hospital  
Senate President Pro Tempore Appointee

**Martha Hill, Commissioner**

Counsel  
Attorney General Appointee

**Cristy Sellers, Commissioner**

Director of Center for Health Advancement, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH)  
ADH Permanent Designee

**Zsanica Ervin, Administrative Analyst**

# ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION EVALUATION TEAM

**Emily Lane, MFA, PhD(c)**

Project Director

**Betty Hubbard, EdD, MCHES**

Evaluator: Arkansas Biosciences Institute

**Marc Sestir, PhD**

Evaluator: UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health

**Denise Demers, PhD, CHES**

Evaluator: Arkansas Minority Health Initiative

**Janet Wilson, PhD**

Evaluator: Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program

**Joseph Howard, PhD**

Evaluator: Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program

**Ed Powers, PhD**

Evaluator: UAMS Centers on Aging

**Jacquie Rainey, DrPH, MCHES**

Co-PI & Administrator; Evaluator: UAMS East Regional Campus

**Rhonda McClellan, EdD**

Co-PI

Qualitative Report



UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS™



# BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH

ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE (ABI), UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (COPH), ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE (MHI), \*TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM (TPCP), TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM (TS-MEP), UAMS CENTERS ON AGING (UAMS-COA), UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS (UAMS EAST)

\*TPCP FUNDS UAPB PROGRAMS: GRADUATE ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM (GASP), MINORITY RESEARCH CENTER (MRC), MINORITY SUB-RECIPIENT GRANT OFFICE (MSRGO)

## EDUCATION

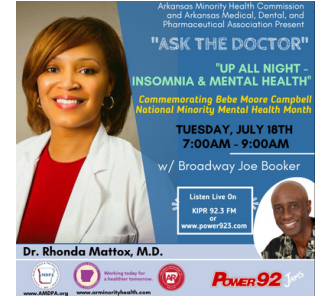
**18,189**

EDUCATION ENCOUNTERS

**4,268**

YOUTH ENCOUNTERS

MHI, TPCP,  
UAMS-COA, UAMS East



The MHI continues to sponsor its monthly "Ask the Doctor" program on Power92 Jams radio station. In July, Dr. Rhonda Mattox discussed insomnia and mental health and answered questions from local listeners.

**1,097**

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS  
& STUDENTS EDUCATED

ABI, COPH, TPCP,  
UAMS-COA, UAMS East



**23**

ARKANSANS ENROLLED IN  
UAMS EAST GOOD FOOD  
RX PROGRAM



**UAMS**  
Fay W. Boozman  
College of Public Health

**14**

DISTANCE-ACCESSIBLE  
COURSES OFFERED  
BY COPH



**8**

PRESENTATIONS MADE  
AVAILABLE STATEWIDE  
BY COPH



## SERVICE



**be well**

**991**

ARKANSANS ENROLLED  
IN SMOKING CESSATION  
VIA BE WELL ARKANSAS

**be well**  
baby

**88**

COUNSELING SESSIONS  
FOR BE WELL BABY  
PROGRAM



**10,483**

ARKANSANS SERVED  
BY TS-MEP



Photo from DDS  
Speaks Newsletter

The Blue Umbrella store continues to provide employment support and opportunities for Arkansans with intellectual and development disabilities. The July newsletter highlighted artist Robyn Moore.



**1,367**

PATIENT  
ENCOUNTERS

UAMS-COA, UAMS East



**9,811**

EXERCISE  
ENCOUNTERS

UAMS-COA, UAMS East



**4,276**

HEALTH  
SCREENINGS

MHI, UAMS East (estimated)



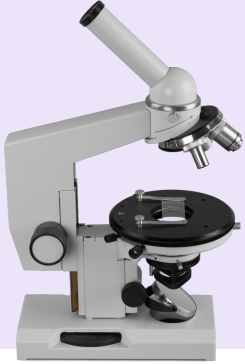
# BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH



ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE (ABI), UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (COPH), ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE (MHI), \*TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM (TPCP), TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM (TS-MEP), UAMS CENTERS ON AGING (UAMS-COA), UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS (UAMS EAST)

\*TPCP FUNDS UAPB PROGRAMS: GRADUATE ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM (GASP), MINORITY RESEARCH CENTER (MRC), MINORITY SUB-RECIPIENT GRANT OFFICE (MSRGO)

## RESEARCH



**Arkansas  
Biosciences  
Institute**

ABI-supported research for FY23 included studies related to childhood asthma, obesity, dyslexia, Parkinson's disease, genomics, imaging, tobacco use, food safety, and rice yields, among other topics.



**226**

ABI RESEARCH  
PROJECTS  
IN FY23

**30%**

OF RESEARCH IS  
COLLABORATIVE  
BETWEEN ABI  
INSTITUTIONS

**536**

PUBLICATIONS IN FY23

**310**

PRESENTATIONS IN FY23



**UAMS**  
Fay W. Boozman  
College of Public Health



**108**

COPH FACULTY  
RESEARCH PROJECTS

Ongoing research at the UAMS COPH addresses topics such as maternal health, colorectal screenings, food insecurity, birth defects, tobacco use and prevention, rural health, and health disparities, among other topics.

**95%**

OF PROJECTS  
FOCUSED ON  
ARKANSAS



Michael Thomsen, PhD  
(photo credit: UAMS COPH)

**UAMS**

Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health

Center for the Study of Obesity

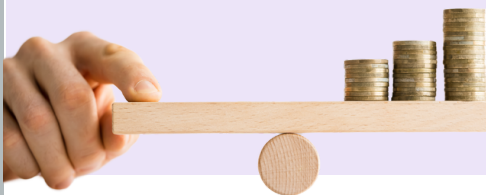
The UAMS Center for the Study of Obesity will lead a \$1.2 million, three-year research project examining how the availability of school meals benefits the mental and behavioral status of youths. Michael Thomsen (pictured above), Ph.D., COPH professor and director of the center, said: "Our focus is to help improve mental health outcomes in children. ... A young person who struggles with concentration or behavior because of food insecurity may be referred for mental health screenings when what they really need is better nutrition. If it is possible to reduce the burden of childhood mental health conditions through school nutrition programs, that would greatly benefit children and families here in Arkansas and across the United States."



## ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$88.5 Million**

LEVERAGED BY ABI IN FY23



**\$6.95**

IN EXTRAMURAL  
FUNDING PER  
ATSC \$1

Arkansas  
Biosciences  
Institute



**\$35 Million**

IN CLAIMS PAID BY TS-MEP

**\$26 Million**

LEVERAGED IN FEDERAL  
MATCHING FUNDS

**\$13.4 Million**

LEVERAGED BY COPH IN FY23



**\$4.18**

IN EXTRAMURAL  
FUNDING PER  
ATSC \$1

**UAMS**

Fay W. Boozman  
College of Public Health

**UAMS** Donald W. Reynolds  
Institute on Aging

CENTERS ON AGING



**\$693,451**

Leveraged by UAMS-COA,  
equal to \$1.58 per ATSC \$1





# BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH

Arkansas Biosciences Institute (ABI), UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH), Arkansas Minority Health Initiative (MHI), \*Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (TPCP), Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program (TS-MEP), UAMS Centers on Aging (UAMS-COA), UAMS East Regional Campus (UAMS East)

\*TPCP funds UAPB programs: Graduate Addiction Studies Program (GASP), Minority Research Center (MRC), Minority Sub-Recipient Grant Office (MISRGO)

## TESTIMONIALS

**Arkansas Biosciences Institute:** *"ABI has commemorated 20-plus years of encouraging, supporting, and increasing innovative research in Arkansas. Through its responsible stewardship of ABI support, ACRI continues to drive significant research to make children better today and healthier tomorrow. . . . Daniel Sadler, PhD . . . is harnessing rodent models to study the roles of the mitochondrion in models of hyper metabolism and metabolic disease, gaining experience . . . in high resolution respirometry to assess mitochondrial respiratory function."* -- Pete Mourani, MD, ABI institutional director at Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI)

**UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health:** *The UAMS Center for the Study of Obesity will lead a \$1.2 million research project examining how the availability of school meals benefits the mental and behavioral status of youths. "If our preliminary hypothesis holds true, there will be profound implications on school meal policies. . . . What we're doing is something that can teach the entire nation about school meals. . . . We're uniquely positioned to answer questions about school meals and health in Arkansas because of our partnership with ACHI and its investments in statewide data analytics capabilities."* -- Michael Thomsen, PhD, UAMS COPH professor

**Arkansas Minority Health Initiative:** *"Addiction is something the entire world deals with. So many people deal with it and so many people don't want to talk about it because there's a stigma. . . . The hard part is asking for help and seeking that help and getting on that recovery journey, but once you get on it and you stay on it, you know that your life can be so much better. Now, nearly three years later, I feel so much better, and I have accomplished a lot. . . . Events like Recovery Jam help me and so many others get to celebrate our sobriety."* -- Participant at Recovery Jam

**Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program:** *"I made a great connection at a community event, Tiffany Hough. I connected with her a couple of times during this quarter, and I have multiple opportunities to collaborate with her in the future. Being able to attend community events in the summer has led me to have multiple vaping presentations scheduled for the second quarter."* -- Participants in community educational programs

**UAMS Centers on Aging:** *"It taught me a lot more on how to deal with a resident with dementia and Alzheimer's. Helped me on what to say, what to do, and how to deal with the situation!"* -- Certified Dementia Practitioner training participant at Northeast COA

**UAMS East Regional Campus:** *"I had a great experience during the Lake Village rural family medicine course! Dr. Parks was a wonderful preceptor and an excellent teacher throughout the month. All of the other staff that I worked with were welcoming and helpful. Lake Village Clinic and Chicot Memorial Medical Center provided a great view of how important family medicine physicians are to small communities and rural areas. Overall, I was able to see good cases in both the clinic and the hospital, and I also learned about the benefits and challenges that come with rural medicine."* -- Allen Norris, UAMS M4 Student

# **PROGRAM PROGRESS AND EVALUATION**



# ABI PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## Program Description

The Arkansas Biosciences Institute, the agricultural and biomedical research program of the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act, is a partnership of scientists from Arkansas Children's Research Institute, Arkansas State University, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The ABI supports long-term agricultural and biomedical research at its five member institutions and focuses on fostering collaborative research that connects investigators from various disciplines across these five institutions. The ABI uses this operational approach to address the goals as outlined in the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act. These goals are to conduct:

- Agricultural research with medical implications;
- Bioengineering research that expands genetic knowledge and creates new potential applications in the agricultural-medical fields;
- Tobacco-related research that identifies and applies behavioral, diagnostic, and therapeutic knowledge to address the high level of tobacco-related illnesses in Arkansas;
- Nutritional and other research that is aimed at preventing and treating cancer, congenital and hereditary conditions, or other related conditions; and
- Other areas of developing research that are related or complementary to primary ABI-supported programs.

## Program Goal

The goal of the ABI is to develop new tobacco-related medical and agricultural research initiatives to improve the access to new technologies, improve the health of Arkansans, and stabilize the economic security of Arkansas.

# ABI EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities

The ABI executive director and the program project manager plan to conduct site visits to each of the member institutions. The purpose of these visits is to network with the ABI institutional directors and to place particular emphasis on the importance of sending annual report data in a timely manner. An additional topic on the agenda is to generate solutions to remedy access issues with the All-Payer Claims Database (APCD). Although access for the research investigators has gotten better, there continues to be room for improvement. Discussions about accessibility to the APCD will continue and progress will be monitored until the data can be easily retrieved by all users.

## Challenges

APCD access continues to be problematic because the database is utilized by many research investigators who are not properly trained in its use. This lack of training limits the ability of other researchers to access the database. Historically there has been little assistance to help with these issues. Dr. McGehee and the stakeholders continue discussions to solve the research investigators' access issues. Kenley Money, director of information systems for the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) works with Dr. McGehee on various applications that will include helpful tips and online training for all users. This database is a tremendous asset to all of the ABI researchers; therefore, ABI will continue to strive for perfection until it is achieved.

## Evaluator Comments

Since its inception, the scientific investigators of ABI exhibited an ongoing record of research that culminates in publications, presentations, and media contacts. These outreach activities allow ABI researchers from the five programs to disseminate their findings to the public as well as professionals. As research projects progressed, some findings led to unique intellectual property and commercial applications that were eligible for patent protection. All of these metrics provide evidence of the program's ongoing successes.

From the spring of 2020 through the most recent quarters, the response to the research challenges presented by COVID-19 illustrated the commitment ABI researchers were willing and able to make to preserve the health of Arkansans. The diverse nature of the projects generated during the pandemic provided insights into the ability and capacity of investigators to channel their expertise into mitigation, treatment, and prevention of morbidity and mortality caused by the virus. During the past fiscal year, ABI was able to resume specific focus on the indicators that demonstrate the success of the program even though the COVID-19 virus continues to affect the population as well as research and outreach efforts.



# ABI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

The institute's research results should translate into commercial, alternate technological, and other applications wherever appropriate in order that the research results may be applied to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of any health-related programs in the state. The institute should also obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

- **Indicator:** The five member institutions will continue to rely on funding from extramural sources with the goal of increasing leveraged funding from a baseline of \$3.15 for every \$1.00 in ABI funding.
  - **Progress: Met**
  - **Activity:** This indicator was met for the fiscal year. During FY23, investigators received \$6.95 in extramural funding for every \$1 provided by the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement. These combined funds are used to support pilot projects, purchase new equipment, gain access to core laboratories, hire critical research technicians, and develop collaborative relationships. Such efforts provide infrastructure and support personnel to ensure the success of extramural grant applications.
- **Indicator:** ABI-funded research will lead to the development of intellectual property, as measured by the number of patents filed and received.
  - **Progress: Met**
  - **Activity:** This indicator was met for the fiscal year. Patent filings and patent awards are key indicators of entrepreneurship, innovation, and potential commercial opportunities at ABI. In FY 2023, there were five patent filings by three of the member institutions and three patent awards to ABI-supported research investigators from two of the member institutions.
- **Indicator:** The ABI will promote its activities through various media outlets to broaden the scope of impact of its research.
  - **Progress: Met**
  - **Activity:** This indicator was met for the fiscal year. For FY23, ABI made 92 media contacts that occurred in a variety of formats: 34 newspaper articles, 37 press releases, three news conferences, and 18 television/radio broadcasts. These contacts highlight the activities of ABI investigators and also increase the scope and impact of research conducted by this program.

# ABI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Short-Term Objective

The Arkansas Biosciences Institute shall initiate new research programs for the purpose of conducting, as specified in § 19-12-115, agricultural research with medical implications, bioengineering research, tobacco-related research, nutritional research focusing on cancer prevention or treatment, and other research approved by the board.

- **Indicator:** The ABI will allocate funding to its five member institutions to support research, while also monitoring that funded research activities are conducted on time, within scope, and with no overruns.
  - **Progress: Met**
  - **Activity:** This indicator was met for the fiscal year. During FY 2023, research investigators reported 226 new and ongoing research projects covering all five research areas. Funding was also allocated to initiate research start-ups and to maintain ongoing projects by purchasing equipment, updating infrastructure, and providing animal care.
- **Indicator:** The ABI and its member institutions will systematically disseminate research results and ensure that at least 290 publications and 370 presentations are delivered each year. These include presentations and publications of results, curricula, and interventions developed using the grant funding, symposia held by investigators, and the creation of new research tools and methodologies that will advance science in the future.
  - **Progress: Unmet; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator was unmet for FY23. Although ABI reported 536 publications, well above the goal of 290, research investigators fell slightly short of the expected number of presentations with 310. Publications by ABI investigators included 301 independent research articles and 235 articles in collaboration with other researchers. No new nor improved methodologies or research tools were developed during the fiscal year.
- **Indicator:** Employment supported by the ABI and extramural funding will be maintained at a baseline of 300 full-time equivalent (FTE) with at least 65% of the FTE supported by extramural funds.
  - **Progress: Unmet; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator was unmet for FY23. During the fiscal year, 206 FTE jobs were supported by ABI and extramural funding. This number falls below the expectation of 300 FTEs. However, of these 206 jobs, 65% were supported by extramural funding. This percentage met the metric described in the indicator.

# ABI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

■ **Indicator:** The ABI will facilitate and maintain research collaboration at a level of 20% – 25% among member institutions.

- **Progress: Met**

- **Activity:** This indicator was met for the fiscal year. Of the 226 new and ongoing research projects, 215 were collaborative. Of these collaborative projects, 30% were collaborations between scientists at ABI-supported institutions. Research activities included a wide range of health-related topics such as pediatric asthma, organic recycling, memory dysfunction in metabolic disease, human norovirus infection and control, and hospital violence intervention.

# ABI TESTIMONIAL

## **Institutional Director Praises ABI and Research on Metabolic Disease**

Pete Mourani, MD, ABI institutional director at Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI), president of ACRI and professor at UAMS Department of Pediatrics, shared the following: "ABI has commemorated 20-plus years of encouraging, supporting, and increasing innovative research in Arkansas. Through its responsible stewardship of ABI support, ACRI continues to drive significant research to make children better today and healthier tomorrow. For example, Daniel Sadler, PhD, received one of the two-year intramural awards in 2022. Dr. Sadler is a postdoctoral fellow in Pediatric Developmental Nutrition at the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center (ACNC). At the ACNC, he is harnessing rodent models to study the roles of the mitochondrion in models of hyper metabolism and metabolic disease, gaining experience with a rat model of divergent cardiorespiratory fitness in high resolution respirometry to assess mitochondrial respiratory function."

# COPH PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## **Program Description**

The Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH) educates a public health workforce and advances the health of the public by investigating the causes, treatments, and prevention of human health problems. Preventing chronic disease and promoting positive health behavior is the most effective way to improve the health of all people. The College's mission of improving the health of all Arkansans is realized through teaching and research as well as service to elected officials, agencies, organizations, and communities. Examples of the complex health issues addressed include improving the multiple dimensions of access to healthcare; reducing the preventable causes of chronic disease; controlling infectious diseases; reducing environmental hazards, violence, substance abuse, and injury; and promoting preparedness for health issues resulting from terrorist acts, natural disasters, and newly emerging infectious diseases.

## **Program Goal**

The goal of the COPH is to improve the health and promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Arkansas through education, research, and service.

# COPH EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities

Over the course of the July–September quarter the UAMS College of Public Health sought various opportunities to improve the value it provides for Arkansans via education, service, and research. In addition to the information provided elsewhere in the report, a major ongoing research project on the health effects of school meals on children, directed by a COPH faculty member, is summarized below by journalist Kev’ Moye (2023a).

The UAMS Center for the Study of Obesity will lead a \$1.2 million, multiorganization, three-year research project examining how the availability of school meals benefits the mental and behavioral status of youths.

Michael Thomsen, Ph.D., professor in the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health Department of Health Policy and Management and director of the center, said the study provides a unique opportunity to understand how school meal policy can impact common childhood behavioral disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

“We will be able to study whether better access to school meals reduces the burden of behavioral disorders among children who face an elevated risk of food insecurity,” Thomsen said. “We’ll specifically be looking at whether diagnosis or healthcare use is impacted when schools provide universal free meals, make breakfast available after classes begin (breakfast after the bell) – or even both meal delivery options. Earlier evidence indicates that more children are able to participate in school nutrition when schools are able to take advantage of these meal options.”

“Some children may be dealing with hunger pangs at school,” he added. “Most of us can relate to being hangry. In this situation, it’s easier for a person to lose control or behave in a way that they otherwise wouldn’t.”

The study titled, “The Impact of School Meal Delivery on Behavioral Disorders among Children in Health Disparity Populations,” is peer reviewed and funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Institute of Mental Health. The research team will receive slightly over \$1.2 million in total funding.

The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) is among the partnering groups on the project. Joe Thompson, M.D., MPH, president and CEO of ACHI, noted that collaborations are vital to making public health strides in Arkansas. This partnership takes on increased importance because it is associated with addressing the aftermath of child hunger.

# COPH EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities Continued

"This project is using data to inform policy through the Arkansas Healthcare Transparency Initiative," Thompson said. "Food insecurity is a complex issue that overlaps many social, cultural, economic, and policy issues. To create actionable insights that guide successful policies, we need to foster strategic partnerships that bridge those areas and ground future decisions in data-based evidence."

The researchers have three specific aims, spanning gender, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The aims are:

- Describe variation in medical diagnoses for ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder;
- Quantify the effect of school meal delivery policies and medical diagnoses on disciplinary outcomes and academic achievement; and
- Determine the effect of universal meals and breakfast after the bell, alone and in combination, on the likelihood of diagnosed childhood behavioral disorders and subsequent service utilization.

"Our focus is to help improve mental health outcomes in children," Thomsen said. "A young person who struggles with concentration or behavior because of food insecurity, may be referred for mental health screenings when what they really need is better nutrition. If it is possible to reduce the burden of childhood mental health conditions through school nutrition programs, that would greatly benefit children and families here in Arkansas and across the United States."

Findings of the study may also have implications for broader social outcomes including the criminal justice system.

"Data from our earlier research shows that schoolchildren are less likely to face school discipline when meals are more readily available," Thomsen said. "Arkansas ranks second in the nation for both the percentage of children diagnosed with ADHD and for childhood food insecurity. Other studies show that in addition to food insecurity, suspension or expulsion from school can exacerbate behavioral disorders, which may predispose the child to interactions with the juvenile justice system. Universal free meals and breakfast after the bell increase participation in school meals and are feasible meal delivery options for many schools. Because they remain underutilized, these options may be one way to help curb that trend."

# COPH EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities Continued

The researchers are eager to develop new research findings to understand how school meal policies can impact mental health.

“If our preliminary hypothesis holds true, there will be profound implications on school meal policies,” Thomsen said. “What we’re doing is something that can teach the entire nation about school meals. Childhood behavioral disorders are a problem that resonates nationally. We’re uniquely positioned to answer questions about school meals and health in Arkansas because of our partnership with ACHI and its investments in statewide data analytics capabilities.”

## Challenges Continued

The COPH continues to face challenges in its pursuit of its ongoing goals. One particular challenge, migrating student data to a new Workday system, is summarized below.

Workday will be implemented as the new student information system at UAMS in the summer of 2024, including the COPH and other colleges and the Graduate School. Representatives from each college and the Graduate School; the Office of the University Registrar; and Institutional Research, Policy, and Accreditation are currently testing the new system to ensure the migration of data from the current student information system to Workday is as seamless as possible. The testing is important but also time consuming and requires coordination and near instant feedback from various individuals in the college to ensure Workday contains the data points necessary for reporting and advising. The COPH fully expects the coordination and testing of the system now will provide for a smoother and easier transition in the summer.

## Evaluator Comments

The COPH is on track to meet all of its annual goals. Some indicators are not reported in the July-September report but will be included in the upcoming biennial report. Over the summer, COPH faculty continued to secure and implement research grants, to engage in public service, and to make health-related courses and presentations available to the public. In all of these areas a particular focus on improving health outcomes for Arkansans was present. Additionally, the COPH has used ATSC funds to leverage an impressive \$4.18 in grants and other outside funds for each \$1 in tobacco money received. The COPH is using its ATSC funds effectively and efficiently to improve the overall health of Arkansans.



# COPH INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

Elevate the overall ranking of the health status of Arkansans.

- **Indicator:** Through consultations, partnerships and dissemination of knowledge, the COPH serves as an educational resource for Arkansans (e.g., general public, public health practitioners and researchers, and policymakers) with the potential to affect public health practice and policy – and population health.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Fifty-two relevant activities were reported by faculty, covering a wide range of educational contributions. Of these, 37 are statewide in scope, nine a national scope, and six focused on central Arkansas. Relevant activities included service as contributors and consultants to health-related committees, expert panels, and task forces; presentations disseminating knowledge to professional, nonprofessional, and general public audiences; and partnerships with public health practitioners and health-related community groups.
  
- **Indicator:** COPH faculty productivity is maintained at a level of two publications in peer-reviewed journals per one full-time equivalent (FTE) employee for primary research faculty.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Data for this indicator are reported in the October-December quarter and will be presented in the 2022-23 biennial report.
  
- **Indicator:** Research conducted by COPH faculty and students contributes to public health practice, public health research, and the health and well-being of Arkansans.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. In the July-September quarter COPH faculty engaged in 108 grants and research projects, 103 (95%) of which were based in Arkansas. These projects addressed a wide variety of health-related topics, including reducing rural disparities in cardiovascular disease, connecting tobacco use to prostate cancer, and assessing remote administration of healthcare.

# COPH INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** COPH faculty, staff, and students are engaged in research that is based in Arkansas.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. A large majority (103 of 108, or 95%) of research projects were based in Arkansas.
  
- **Indicator:** The COPH makes courses and presentations available statewide.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. During the July–September quarter, the COPH made 14 distance-accessible courses available statewide; additionally, eight presentations were made available statewide. Examples of topics include suicide prevention, public health law, and diabetes.
  
- **Indicator:** Twenty percent of enrolled students at the COPH come from rural areas of Arkansas.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. During the summer semester 73 of 265 enrolled students (28%) came from rural areas of Arkansas.
  
- **Indicator:** COPH graduates' race/ethnicity demographics for Whites, African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos are reflective of Arkansas race/ethnicity demographics.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. The COPH reported three students who graduated in the summer of 2023. One graduate was Hispanic/Latino, one was White, and the third did not report race.
  
- **Indicator:** The majority of COPH alumni stay in Arkansas and work in public health.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal overall; however, in this quarter two of the three graduates indicated they intended to pursue a public health position outside of Arkansas, with the third not pursuing a healthcare position, degree, residency, or fellowship. This is, of course, a very small number of graduates and for the year overall the indicator is on track.

# COPH INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Short-Term Objective

Obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

- **Indicator:** The COPH shall maintain a 1.5:1 ratio of total annual fiscal year extramural award funding to annual fiscal year tobacco settlement dollars.
  - **Progress: Met**
  - **Activity:** This indicator has been met for the fiscal year. Fiscal data from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023 showed that the COPH received \$3,204,914 in funding from the ATSC (which includes \$2,915,694.85 for FY23 and a carryover of \$289,219.35 from FY22), while grants and contracts totaled \$13,383,580. This indicates a 4.18:1 ratio of extramural award funding to tobacco funding.

# COPH TESTIMONIAL

## **COPH Alumna Uses Career to Promote Public Health and Public Health Education**

In addition to the COPH's ongoing direct efforts at community outreach, UAMS alumni frequently cite their experience at the college as a key factor in choosing careers aiding Arkansas communities with major health concerns. A testimonial from one such alumni, who shares the role that UAMS COPH played in her current position as education coordinator for the UAMS HBCU Med Track Program, is summarized below in an article by Kev' Moye (2023b).

Amanda Winston, MPH, is adamant about promoting the value of public health and a public health education to the students she mentors.

Winston, who graduated from the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health in the spring of 2020, is the education coordinator for the UAMS HBCU Med Track Program and its S.U.P.E.R. Project at the University of Arkansas–Pine Bluff (UAPB) and Philander Smith University. "The HBCU Med Track Program allows me to connect with students enrolled at historically Black colleges and universities and also assist them throughout the application process for any UAMS health program they're interested in," she said.

"I receive the chance to educate students on public health, the components of research and health disparities. My students also conduct public health research that focuses on a specific health disparity. I'm shaping undergraduate students into public health advocates."

Winston, an alumna of UAPB, embraces the opportunity to encourage individuals to get a public health education. From the standpoint of introducing young adults to public health, it is a full-circle situation for Winston. She first heard about public health as a member of the UAPB Biology Club. During one of their meetings, a state representative was the guest speaker. The state representative spoke on the impact of public health and how its various careers help improve the standard of living for Arkansans.

When the state representative referenced the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health and its dual degree MPH-MD program, Winston became intrigued. She then researched the concept of public health and the college. Also, one of her instructors spoke glowingly about the school.

"I had a professor who told me to apply," Winston said. "I had completed a year of clinical hours and thought that would be a great time to pursue a public health education before going to medical school."

## COPH TESTIMONIAL

Winston ultimately applied for and was accepted into the college, earning a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, with a concentration in Health Policy and Management (HPM). The Pine Bluff native said attending UAMS was invaluable in terms of education, cultural enlightenment, and gaining a sense of accomplishment.

"The college exposed me to several public health concentrations," Winston said. "But the HPM concentration ignited the passion I have for creating and reforming infrastructure and policies. I also enjoyed connecting with people from different backgrounds," she said. "It was exhilarating pursuing a public health degree from a college that's highly respected nationally."

When asked about her job and its role in advancing public health in Arkansas, Winston said it is important because it teaches future leaders of society about public health while also addressing current representation shortcomings in healthcare.

"I promote public health to students who represent an underserved population," Winston said. "Although they begin as a community representative through lived experiences, as a result, they pursue public health careers and other fields of healthcare, becoming the public health and/or healthcare practitioner."

"Arkansas's overall health status can improve with the understanding of what public health is and why it's important," she said. "Public health can mitigate issues such as access to healthier foods, better housing options, and much more. I want to see Arkansas thrive and become healthier."

Winston, who plans to pursue a doctoral degree, acknowledged that molding the students into healthcare professionals is more than a job. It's her way of helping to promote health equity, public health, and to make an impact on society. "Over the last three years the best accolades I've received are my students gaining admission into UAMS' colleges," she said. "I always take pride in the students continuing their education at UAMS."



# MHI PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## **Program Description**

The Arkansas Minority Health Initiative (MHI) was established in 2001 through Initiated Act I to administer the Targeted State Needs for screening, monitoring, and treating hypertension, strokes, and other disorders disproportionately critical to minority groups in Arkansas by 1) increasing awareness, 2) providing screening or access to screening, 3) developing intervention strategies (including educational programs) and developing/maintaining a database. To achieve this goal, the MHI's focus is on addressing existing disparities in minority communities, educating these communities on diseases that disproportionately impact them, encouraging healthier lifestyles, promoting awareness of services and accessibility within our current healthcare system, and collaborating with community partners.

## **Program Goal**

The goal of the MHI is to improve healthcare systems in Arkansas and access to healthcare delivery systems, thereby resolving critical deficiencies that negatively impact the health of the citizens of the state.



# MHI EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## **Opportunities**

The MHI capitalized on multiple partnerships this quarter to reach minority Arkansans. The Mobile Health Unit continued to reach several counties throughout the state, while providing more than half of the agency's total screenings. Without the Mobile Health Unit, the agency's reach during this hiring freeze would be severely impacted.

## **Challenges**

Heart disease continues to be a huge burden for minority Arkansans, and the MHI continues to battle against heart disease and other health outcomes faced by vulnerable populations. The MHI continues to experience staffing challenges and a state hiring freeze. This means MHI staff wear many hats and perform multiple tasks with few resources. This challenge resulted in fewer in-person outreach activities and a heavier reliance on multimedia efforts to reach Arkansans.

## **Evaluator Comments**

The MHI continues to put forward robust efforts despite the difficulties with staffing. The agency continues fruitful outreach efforts and has maintained their screening numbers as well as a wide-reaching multimedia campaign. The MHI educates thousands of Arkansans each quarter on crucial topics regarding overall health, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use, breastfeeding, and mental health, among other topics. The agency continues to capitalize on partnerships with other health and community organizations, and the agency is always seeking new opportunities to collaborate. All in all, the MHI remains committed to providing vital services and information that will help minority Arkansans reduce death/disability due to tobacco, chronic, and other lifestyle-related illnesses.

# MHI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

Reduce death/disability due to tobacco, chronic, and other lifestyle-related illnesses of Arkansans.

■ **Indicator:** The MHI will raise awareness and provide access to screenings for disorders disproportionately critical to minorities as well as to any citizen within the state regardless of racial/ethnic group, as measured by the number of health screenings, educational encounters, counties reached, as well as efforts related to multimedia outreach.

- **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**

- **Activity:** This indicator is on track. MHI continues its campaign to raise awareness and provide access to screenings. Compared to last year, screening numbers remained consistent. MHI offered roughly 3,200 screenings this quarter; many through the Mobile Health Unit. *Recovery Jam* was held this quarter and was hosted by Better Community Development Inc. and sponsored by the MHI. The event celebrates sobriety and recovery; 600 Arkansans attended and 681 health screenings were offered. This quarter, MHI reported approximately 1,050 educational encounters, though this number seems to be an underreporting given all of the partnerships and activities the agency engaged in. This number of educational encounters is down quite a bit from this time last year (compared to 7,000 encounters) and may reflect staffing and resource shortages as well as underreporting of community participation.
- The agency continues to work with partners to raise awareness regarding disorders disproportionately critical to minority Arkansans. This quarter, MHI increased their partnerships from 11 to 13. The two new partnerships include UAMS Culinary Medicine Teaching Kitchen (Cook Along program) and the city of Little Rock for the Back to School Family Fun Fest. The MHI also partnered with 11 organizations to distribute 1,328 face masks and 1,005 sanitizers to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This initiative impacted Drew, Jefferson, and Pulaski counties.
- Through the MHI's media outlets, the agency offered more than 1,000 paid commercials directly related to tobacco on six television stations. Again, this number is much lower than this same time last year, which also mirrors the staffing and resource shortages, as well as new protocols for approving content. Overall, MHI's social media outlets garnered thousands of social media impressions. These media campaigns increased awareness related to a variety of health topics. The highest rated social media post had 3,500 impressions and focused on the Annual Back to School Family Fest, which had fun activities along with child immunizations and screenings for adults. Also, the "Ask the Doctor" segment continues to run monthly on Power 92 Jams radio station where health professionals discuss topics such as heart disease, prostate cancer, and children's mental health. All of the agency's multimedia efforts allow the MHI to maintain a wide reach across the state and in minority communities.



# MHI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Short-Term Objective

Prioritize the list of health problems and planned interventions for minority populations and increase the number of Arkansans screened and treated for tobacco, chronic, and lifestyle related illnesses.

- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to stroke awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. During the quarter, 637 blood pressure screenings and 359 cholesterol screenings were provided. These numbers are very close to the same time last year. The MHI also reached over 1,000 Arkansans at in-person events and impacted thousands more via multimedia efforts. Programs and ads on TV and radio remained robust and wide reaching and focused on topics related to stroke.
- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to hypertension awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. MHI provided 637 blood pressure screenings this quarter and reached more than 1,000 Arkansans at community events. Several paid commercials shown targeting minority communities focused on healthy eating, exercise, and the benefit of getting regular health screenings and check-ups.
- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to heart disease awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. MHI provided 359 cholesterol screenings and more than 1,000 educational encounters this quarter. The MHI also tallied hundreds of television commercials that focused on topics like tobacco cessation and exercise. Furthermore, the MHI continues to provide awareness for heart disease through social media outlets and radio programs including "Ask the Doctor" and "Let's Chat." The Southern Ain't Fried Sundays (SAFS) program is a longstanding program encouraging healthy eating with a 21-day Meal Plan offered. The SAFS Facebook page now has 340 followers.

# MHI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to diabetes awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. In total, 512 glucose screenings were offered by the agency and more than 1,000 Arkansans were reached through community education efforts and several thousand more were reached through one of MHI's multimedia platforms. The agency uses TV, radio, and social media to educate and interact with Arkansans across the state. Diabetes is always a top priority in MHI's health education efforts.
  
- **Indicator:** The MHI will conduct ongoing needs assessments to determine the most critical minority health needs to target, including implementation of a comprehensive survey of racial and ethnic minority disparities in health and healthcare every five years.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. A formal survey of racial and ethnic minority disparities is conducted every five years. The next survey is scheduled to be completed in FY24. Updates will be provided in the upcoming 2022–2023 Biennial Report. The MHI continues to assess needs and determine critical health issues for the populations that the agency serves. This is done through community interactions at in-person events, interactions via social media and radio shows like "Ask the Doctor", and diverse organizational partnerships.
  
- **Indicator:** The MHI will develop and implement at least one pilot project every five years to identify effective strategies to reduce health disparities among Arkansans.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. This quarter, Camp iCAN was offered to 18 youth in Ashley County. This is a three-day program with activities, workshops, and exercises that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and self-confidence. Camp iCAN is hosted annually in the summer months and has been a consistent project that supports youth health education. The MHI identifies effective strategies and broadens its partnerships each year to reach youth through Camp iCAN. Lessons learned and relationships formed during these camps can reduce health disparities in Arkansas, especially when youth share what they have learned with their families and friends.

# MHI TESTIMONIAL

## **Celebrating and Supporting Sobriety**

In September, the MHI partnered with Better Community Development, Inc. for the annual Recovery Jam event, which is focused on individuals who have reclaimed their lives in long-term recovery. The event also honors service providers who make recovery possible. A participant at the event shared a powerful testimony:

- “Addiction is something the entire world deals with, so many people deal with it and so many people don’t want to talk about it because there’s a stigma that you’re a bad person, that you’re less than, that you’re just not normal. I tell my story and speak about it so people know that there is a sense of normalcy in this. It’s normal for someone to be an alcoholic; it’s normal for someone to be an addict. The hard part is asking for help and seeking that help and getting on that recovery journey, but once you get on it and you stay on it, you know that your life can be so much better. Now, nearly three years later, I feel so much better, and I have accomplished a lot. I remember going to my mom and I asked her what I needed to do to make it right, it was my amends to her. She said, ‘You already have because you’re present.’ That’s the gift of sobriety and recovery for me. I get to be present. I get to be in the moment, I get to feel, to experience, I don’t have to shade it or cloud it with drugs and alcohol. Every feeling is not perfect, don’t get me wrong, it’s not. But the fact that I get to feel it, that’s what’s important to me. Events like Recovery Jam helps me and so many others get to celebrate our sobriety whether it is short- or long-term, its recovery.”

# TPCP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## Program Description

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (TPCP) includes community and school education prevention programs, enforcement of youth tobacco control laws, tobacco cessation programs, health communications, and awareness campaigns. The TPCP also sponsors statewide tobacco control programs that involve youth to increase local coalition activities, tobacco-related disease prevention programs, minority initiatives and monitoring, and evaluation. The TPCP follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Best Practices for Tobacco Control 2014 as a guide for program development. Outcomes achieved by Arkansas's TPCP include reducing disease, disability, and death related to tobacco use by preventing initial use of tobacco by young people, promoting quitting, eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke, and educating Arkansans about the deleterious health effects of tobacco use.

## Program Goal

The goal of TPCP is to reduce morbidity and death associated with tobacco use by preventing initiation of tobacco/nicotine products and providing cessation services/resources to Arkansans who want to quit using tobacco.

# TPCP EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities

During the first quarter, TPCP organized virtual Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) training to be held on October 23-27, 2023 and February 12-16, 2024. Also, the second episode of Coral's Reef became available September 18, 2023 on YouTube. This vape prevention animated series and supporting activities targeting grades K-2 was developed by TPCP personnel. Additional information is provided in the Evaluator's Comments section.

TPCP sub-grantees were active this quarter with various meetings, conferences, and educational opportunities. A quick summary of some of the activities are as follows:

- The Arkansas Tobacco Education Initiative (ARTEI) networked at the Dardanelle Chamber Luncheon with such representatives as the Chief Executive Officer of the Boys and Girls Club of the River Valley in order to arrange for vaping education for local youth. One Act 811 presentation was given as an ARTEI webinar. Act 811 requires public high schools and state-supported universities to have opioid overdose reversal kits, to provide information on their locations around campus, and to provide training on how to use these kits. Further, one vaping presentation was given at Magnolia Foster Care. The Arkansas Prevention Summit was held with MidSouth on July 11-12 with approximately 200 attendees. Additionally, ARTEI participated in a variety of events, including the Fall into Resources Fair (with Community Service, Inc.), Garland County Literacy Event at the Garland County Library, the Hispanic Heritage Festival in the Valley at the Arkansas River Valley Library System in Dardanelle, and the Strengthening Arkansas Families Conference as a vendor with MidSouth.
- Project Prevent Youth Coalition (Project Prevent) held one statewide meeting this quarter with 22 advisors in attendance. In addition, final plans were made for the Youth Led Fact Fed Annual Conferences to be held in Jonesboro on October 17 and Benton on October 18. This conference brings youth together who are committed to better health through tobacco prevention.
- The Arkansas Cancer Coalition (ACC) gave four presentations to a total of 44 attendees. ACC personnel also participated in three events with a total of 280 attendees: Monticello Summer Fest (20 attendees); Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation, Prostate Cancer Symposium (10 attendees); and Arkansas Health and Wellness Expo (250 attendees). Plans are already in place to participate in Brief Tobacco Intervention (BTI) Training in February of 2024 as well as the UAMS Family Medicine Update Tobacco and Disease Symposium and the BTI - Arkansas Nurses Association training, both to be held in April 2024.

# TPCP EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Challenges

A couple of challenges were identified by two sub-grantees of TPCP. The Arkansas Tobacco Education Initiative (ARTEI) reports that since the majority of the first quarter was during the summer break, it was difficult to provide an opportunity to give vaping presentations to youth. However, at this time they were able to focus more on booth and networking events. The booth events and other summer friendly events allowed them to offer activities that would be engaging for kids and families rather than the more passive presentations. Additionally, Project Prevent reported that due to staff changes at St. Bernards Healthcare, the Arkansas Cancer Coalition (ACC) will not be able to co-host the annual Tobacco and Disease Symposium. Currently, they are working to identify a new partner with whom they can co-host the symposium.

## Evaluator Comments

A second episode of Coral's Reef became available September 18, 2023 on YouTube. This vape prevention program developed by TPCP personnel is the first in the nation to target kindergarten through second grade youth and can be found at the following links: Coral's Reef - The Vape Ep. 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cROfGceGWo>, and Coral's Reef - Nicotine Ep. 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAAHEGsgn-Q>. Additionally, the Coral's Reef bags that are handed out to children in the targeted K-2 grades are full of educational items to entertain and inform. Children can find stickers featuring the Be Well program and the animal stars of the Coral's Reef show, as well as brightly colored coloring and activity books (designed specifically for age- and skill-appropriate learning). Recognizing the opportunity to reach a wide audience of young children, TPCP also designed a booklet whereby Coral's Reef characters teach children how to "Wash Your Claws" that is also available in the bags.

# TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

Survey data will demonstrate a reduction in numbers of Arkansans who smoke and/or use tobacco.

- **Indicator:** By June 2025, the TPCP will work to decrease the current smoking/smokeless tobacco/Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) use rate among youth (grades 9–12) from 13.7% to 11.7% for smoking, from 12.7% to 11.7% for smokeless tobacco, and from 13.9% to 12.9% for ENDS.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the long-term goal. An annual summary of progress towards this goal will be provided in the fourth quarter of FY24.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2025, (1) the TPCP will work to decrease smoking use among adults (18+) from 22.3% to 20.3%, (2) decrease ENDS use among adults (18+) from 5.7% to 3.7%, and (3) decrease the pregnancy smoking rate from 13.9% to 11.9%.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the long-term goal. An annual summary of progress towards this goal will be provided in the fourth quarter of FY24.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2025, the number of comprehensive smoke-free/tobacco-free policies will increase from 219 to 400.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the long-term goal. An annual summary of progress towards this goal will be provided in the fourth quarter of FY24.



# TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Short-Term Objective

Communities shall establish local tobacco prevention initiatives.

- **Indicator:** By June 2024, 500 presentations will be conducted to educate the public and decision makers on the economic burden of tobacco use, current and emerging tobacco/nicotine products, implementing smoke-free/tobacco-free policies, and dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. During the first quarter, community sub-grantees provided 55 presentations to 684 attendees. These presentations covered topics such as the economic burden of tobacco use, current and emerging tobacco/nicotine products, dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke, and strategies for decreasing exposure. Statewide sub-grantees also conducted presentations for approximately 90 attendees. Additional information on the training and presentations offered by TPCP and statewide sub-grantees can be found in the Opportunities section.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, maintain the sales-to-minor violations at 6.5% or below (Baseline in FY19 = 6.3%).
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. While FY23 ended with a sales-to-minor non-compliance rate of 9.46%, for the first quarter of FY23, that rate has dropped to 7.25%. During the current quarter, the Arkansas Tobacco Control (ATC) conducted 1,476 unannounced compliance checks with 107 sales-to-minor violations for the non-compliance rate of 7.25%. There were 41 online complaints submitted and eight that were called into the 1-877-ID-TEENS number. No retailer training was conducted this quarter.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, Project Prevent will establish seven new school chapters within the Red Counties (Red Counties are those counties with low life expectancy).
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. While no Red County Chapters were added in this first quarter of FY24, Project Prevent facilitated a variety of statewide meetings. See the Opportunities section for additional meetings and activities information.

# TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2024, ADH Health Communication will maintain a comprehensive, multiplatform media plan to prevent youth initiation, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, and promote cessation. (Report Annually)
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. The media plan is reported annually; therefore, an update will be provided in the fourth quarter report for FY24.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, Be Well Arkansas will consistently maintain a tobacco cessation quit rate higher than the previous baseline level of 28% for those enrolled in the program. (Report Quarterly: # of callers requesting service; # of callers enrolled in tobacco cessation counseling {Reset Annually})
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. During the current quarter, Be Well Arkansas (BWA) received 1,889 calls inquiring about tobacco cessation, hypertension, and/or diabetes. A total of 991 individuals enrolled in the tobacco cessation program. Additionally, the BWA Call Center mailed out 159 diabetes and 340 hypertension pamphlets as requested by callers. The quit rate will be reported annually in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, provide quarterly updates on the implementation of the Be Well Baby program.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. For the current quarter, 25 women enrolled in the Be Well Baby program. A total of 88 counseling sessions were conducted (65 prenatal sessions and 23 postpartum sessions for previous enrollees). Be Well Baby provides enrolled participants a total of four prenatal and six postpartum counseling sessions. Additionally, 11 educational packets of Be Well Baby information were mailed out to healthcare providers.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, the MISRGO will work with five new faith-based churches/organizations to implement No Menthol Sunday (NMS) activities.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. This activity will be held in May 2024. Additional information will be forthcoming.

# TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2024, the MISRGO will execute an annual event that supports the mission of the program and report on funded and non-funded attendees.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. Plans are underway to hold the 21st Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference on May 8, 2024. This virtual conference will be held in partnership with the Arkansas Cancer Coalition. MISRGO will also feature speakers from the Graduate Addiction Studies Program (GASP) and the Minority Research Center (MRC) on Tobacco and Addictions.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, the MISRGO will provide and report on technical assistance through direct stakeholders and property owners regarding reducing tobacco related disparities in Arkansas.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. This quarter, MISRGO reports on collaborations for two major projects. First, the "Hate the Vape" tour, for MISRGO's largest group of stakeholders (schools), will begin in the spring. For these presentations, MISRGO is partnering with the Ms. Teen Tours and Arkansas's premiere youth advocate Genine Perez. Second, plans are underway for the Cultural Conversations workshop series. The first workshop will be held in October and will feature Lincoln Mondy, famed documentary filmmaker of "Black Lives Black Lungs."
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, the MRC will distribute requests for proposals (RFP) to fund research studies focused on: 1) Tobacco cessation among African-American women tobacco users, 2) Tobacco use among minority groups in a time of COVID-19, and 3) Tobacco and opioid use among minority youth and young adults.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The RFP will be released in December 2023. Changes to be made to the RFP will be an increase in the amount being awarded, the length of time for awardees, and the areas of focus. Additional information will be provided in the next report.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, the MRC will conduct three virtual and/or face-to-face meetings in minority communities to discuss tobacco usage among minority groups.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. Currently, the plan is to partner with MISRGO in conducting the face-to-face and/or virtual meetings. One of the meetings/presentations will be at the 21st Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference (to be held virtually May 8, 2024). It is expected that those with currently funded research projects will present on their progress.

# TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2024, the MRC will submit three open editorials to small town newspapers focusing on tobacco-related issues in rural communities in Arkansas.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. MRC personnel are currently discussing relevant and current topics related to tobacco use and minority health that may be appropriate for the open editorials. These op-eds will occur in April during minority health month.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, GASP faculty and staff will report the number of new students recruited into their program, the number of students who have graduated from the program, and the number of students who have been provided a stipend.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. During this quarter, a total of 24 students are enrolled in the GASP, including six new students who were admitted to the GASP beginning in the fall semester 2023. This number reflects an increase of seven students from this time last year. The program will award five stipends to GASP students in the amount of \$800 each for the fall semester 2023. While no students graduated from the program during this quarter, a total of 134 students have graduated from the GASP in the past.
  
- **Indicator:** By June 2024, GASP faculty will identify programs interested in initiating tobacco prevention curriculum for juvenile justice programs in Jefferson County, Arkansas.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. As discussed in previous reports, preliminary work has been completed by GASP faculty and students. Specifically, a literature review was conducted to identify an appropriate and previously successful evidence-based tobacco prevention curricula that could be adopted at the Jefferson County Juvenile Detention Center. Since no current model was deemed to fit the needs of the Detention Center, it was determined that the GASP faculty and students would need to create an appropriate prevention model. GASP faculty member, Dr. Antimoore Jackson will continue to lead this project in FY24. Dr. Jackson will work with three GASP students receiving stipends in the fall semester 2023 to advance this indicator. Planning for FY24 work on the indicator began September 2023.

# TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2024, GASP faculty and students will develop three virtual presentations to share with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff community. Two presentations will focus on tobacco and nicotine health hazards and cessation resources, and one presentation will focus on health hazards and addiction symptoms of marijuana use.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. GASP faculty member Dr. Cheryl Golden will assume leadership for this project in FY24. Dr. Golden will work with two GASP students receiving stipends in the fall semester 2023 to advance this indicator. Planning for FY24 work on the indicator began in September 2023.

# TPCP TESTIMONIAL

## Praise for Educational Programs

The ARTEI offers two testimonials from participants in their community educational programs:

- "I made a great connection at a community event, Tiffany Hough. I connected with her a couple of times during this quarter, and I have multiple opportunities to collaborate with her in the future. Being able to attend community events in the summer has led me to have multiple vaping presentations scheduled for the second quarter."
- "The Fall into Resources Fair that I attended was in my hometown of Russellville and it really allowed me to meet several other nonprofit organizations, and they invited me to join two different local health coalitions: Healthy Pope County and Healthy Yell County."

# TS-MEP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## Program Description

The Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program (TS-MEP) is a separate and distinct component of the Arkansas Medicaid Program that improves the health of Arkansans by expanding healthcare coverage and benefits to targeted populations. The program works to expand Medicaid coverage and benefits in four populations:

- Population one expands Medicaid coverage and benefits to pregnant women with incomes ranging from 138–200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL);
- Population two expands inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits to adults aged 19–64;
- Population three expands non-institutional coverage and benefits to seniors age 65 and over;
- Population four expands medical assistance, home and community-based services, and employment supports for eligible adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Tobacco Settlement funds are also used to pay the state share required to leverage federal Medicaid matching funds.

## Program Goal

The goal of the TS-MEP is to expand access to healthcare through targeted Medicaid expansions, thereby improving the health of eligible Arkansans.



# TS-MEP EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities

With the TS-MEP program, the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) provides support for the four TS-MEP populations as well as the state's overall Medicaid efforts. The DHS has had the legislative authority for nearly twenty years to use any savings in the TS-MEP programs to provide funding for traditional Medicaid. These savings are not used to provide any funding for the ARHOME program. As the state of Arkansas continues to explore opportunities for Medicaid reform, new possibilities for using TS-MEP funds may emerge.

## Challenges

As a result of the implementation of the ARHOME program, traditional Medicaid expenditures have decreased. Many Medicaid-eligible adults aged 19-64 are covered by the ARHOME program and receive their coverage through Qualified Health Plans in the individual insurance market. Arkansas Medicaid pays the monthly insurance premiums for the majority of these individuals. For the TS-MEP populations, Pregnant Women Expansion and Hospital Benefit Coverage were expected to significantly decline as individuals are provided health coverage outside of the TS-MEP. As of now, successful performance has been measured by growth in the number of participants in the TS-MEP initiatives. Arkansas DHS may need to continue to explore new performance measurements for the TS-MEP initiatives as individuals are transitioning into new coverage groups.

## Evaluator Comments

The TS-MEP has been impacted by the significant changes in the healthcare system. The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced all populations served through TS-MEP. With many elective medical procedures being placed on hold with the pandemic, there was a decrease in claims as individuals delayed seeking treatment. This may explain the increase in the number of seniors served by the ARSeniors program as more procedures become available. There was also an increase in the other three TS-MEP populations. The lifting of the extending of health coverage during the public health emergency can possibly explain the increases that have been seen in the Pregnant Women Expansion population and Hospital Benefit Coverage during this quarter.

# TS-MEP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

Demonstrate improved health and reduce long-term health costs of Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

■ **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will demonstrate improved health and reduced long-term health costs of Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

- **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
- **Activity:** This indicator is on track. With the implementation of the ARHOME (Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me) program, more individuals will have health coverage beyond the TS-MEP initiatives. Therefore, the TS-MEP long-term impact will be limited compared to the influences outside of the TS-MEP. During this quarter, the TS-MEP provided expanded access to health benefits and services for 10,483 eligible pregnant women, seniors, qualified adults, and persons with developmental disabilities. This is an increase of 776 persons served over the previous quarter. Total claims paid for the TS-MEP populations this reporting period were slightly above \$35.2 million. Additionally, TS-MEP funds are also used to pay the state share required to leverage approximately 70% federal Medicaid matching funds. This amounted to more than \$25.8 million in federal matching Medicaid funds during this quarter, which has a significant impact on health costs and health outcomes for the state of Arkansas.

## Short-Term Objective

The Arkansas Department of Human Services will demonstrate an increase in the number of new Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

■ **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the number of pregnant women with incomes ranging from 138-214% of the FPL enrolled in the Pregnant Women Expansion.

- **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
- **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet. During this quarter, there were 1,244 participants in the TS-MEP initiative Pregnant Women Expansion (PWE) program. This is a significant increase of 263 women being served from the previous quarter. This increase may be due to the lifting of the extended health coverage for pregnant women in other categories during the public health emergency. The TS-MEP continues to provide vital services to thousands of pregnant women each year. This program provides prenatal health services for pregnant women with incomes ranging from 138-214% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Before the TS-MEP funding, the income limit for pregnant women was at or below 100% FPL. In this quarter, the TS-MEP funds for the Pregnant Women Expansion program totaled \$1,131,402.

# TS-MEP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the average number of adults aged 19–64 years receiving inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits through the Hospital Benefit Coverage.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. During this quarter, the TS-MEP initiative Hospital Benefit Coverage (HBC) provided inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits to 721 adults aged 19–64. This is a slight increase of 25 in the number of adults served over the previous quarter. Overall, the HBC program had a significant decrease during the public health emergency. This decrease is due largely to suspended cost share requirements for day one hospitalizations. Traditional Medicaid covered 20 hospital days per year for qualified adults. The HBC program has increased the number of hospital days from 20 to 24 and reduced the copay on the first day of hospitalization from 22% to 10%; though, this has been suspended as noted above. TS-MEP funds for the Hospital Benefit Coverage totaled \$3,588,991 in this quarter.
  
- **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the average number of persons enrolled in the ARSeniors program, which expands non-institutional coverage and benefits for seniors aged 65 and over.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. The ARSeniors program expanded Medicaid coverage to 8,010 seniors during this quarter. This is an increase of 483 seniors in Arkansas. The ARSeniors program serves Arkansans 65 years or older that have incomes at or below 80% of the federal poverty level. Arkansas Medicaid benefits that are not covered by Medicare are available to ARSeniors participants. Some examples of these benefits are coverage for physician, lab, pharmacy, and inpatient services. Additionally, the ARSeniors program pays the Medicare premium to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for qualified seniors. As a result, the SSA does not withhold this premium from these seniors in their SSA benefits. TS-MEP funds for the ARSeniors program totaled \$6,132,402 during this quarter.

# TS-MEP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the average number of persons enrolled in the Developmental Disabilities Services, Community and Employment Supports (CES) Waiver and note the number of adults and children receiving services each quarter by county.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. During this quarter, 508 individuals were provided services through TS-MEP funds. This is a slight increase of five in the number of persons served from the previous quarter and fills the 500 TS-MEP funded slots for this program. While there are only 500 TS-MEP funded slots, there were 508 unique individuals served this quarter because of program participant turnover. In this quarter, a total of 67 children (18 and under) and 441 adults in 73 of 75 counties were provided services. The CES waiver provides assistance for major life activities to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This includes activities such as living independently and working in a job in the community rather than an institutional setting. TS-MEP funding helps to reduce the waitlist for this population of Arkansans. TS-MEP funds for the CES waiver program totaled \$24,439,223 in this quarter.

# UAMS-COA PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## **Program Description**

The purpose of the UAMS Centers on Aging is to address one of the most pressing policy issues facing this country: how to care for the burgeoning number of older adults in rural community settings. The overall goal is to improve the quality of life for older adults and their families through two primary missions: an infrastructure that provides quality interdisciplinary clinical care and innovative education programs.

## **Program Goal**

The goal of the UAMS-COA is to improve the health of older Arkansans through interdisciplinary geriatric care and innovative education programs and to influence health policy affecting older adults.

# UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities

The UAMS-COA continues to seek and find ways to cope with changes in healthcare systems and the needs of the older people in Arkansas. Some of the most encouraging opportunities are described below.

- *Distribution of services:* The UAMS-COA ordinarily offers at least minimal services to residents in a majority of Arkansas counties (this quarter, 50 out of 75 counties were served). As staffing shortages and lingering fears of infectious disease continue to impact many traditional client-based services, the COA directors and clients continue to rely on digital tools and online forms of communication to meet the needs of many clients but a majority of clients are still receiving access to traditional in-person services.
- *Service innovation:* The agency continues to innovate the delivery of services to expand public access to information and educational programming throughout the state. This includes expansion of investments in virtual reality equipment that augments education related to dementia, sensory deficits, and end-of-life care (via a USDA grant). This also includes expansion of the SUCCESS family caregiver program to assist families in the wake of a home healthcare labor shortage.
- *Raising awareness:* The UAMS-COA continues raising awareness about the challenges of aging in Arkansas communities. Representatives from the agency continually pursue public relations opportunities to combat ageism, encourage successful aging practices, promote elder-care as a function of healthy communities, and generally celebrate the contributions of older adults in the state. During this quarter, the UAMS-COA staff have helped draw attention to issues such as food insecurity, dementia, ageism, elder abuse, and senior housing issues. Of particular significance in this regard, Dr. Overton-McCoy, director of the UAMS-COA, is an appointed member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. This appointment helps extend the agency's ability to raise awareness at the highest levels of state government.
- *Partnerships:* The UAMS-COA fosters partnerships with other agencies to lead the state with respect to mitigating falls, expanding geriatric caregiver training, reducing hunger among seniors, and increasing awareness of chronic disease. This quarter, the UAMS-COA partnered with a number of entities to build resources for seniors. These partnerships include UAMS East Regional Campus, Harvest Regional Food Bank, Alzheimer's Arkansas, SHIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program), Workforce Development, AR Rehab, University of Arkansas County Extension Services, Veterans Administration, CASA (Committee Against Spousal Abuse) Women's Shelter, Alzheimer's Association, Senior Olympics, Crystal Bridges, Whole Nedz, Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention, Arkansas Diabetes Advisory Council, Department on Aging Services, first responders, community libraries, rural health clinics, elder law resources, senior housing facilities, assisted living and long-term care facilities, senior home caregiver agencies, local businesses, parks and recreation departments, and community clinics.

# UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities Continued

- *Enhancing the geriatric medicine workforce:* The UAMS-COA works with multiple colleges and universities across the state to recruit and train new geriatric specialists in different allied health fields. This includes sponsoring fellowships for medical students and social workers. It also includes efforts to increase high school student interest in geriatric-related careers.
- *Enhanced attention to social isolation among older adults:* The UAMS-COA has increased attention on social interaction among older adults. The agency has also made efforts to expand opportunities for more cross-generational interaction to help combat ageism and reduce the social isolation of Arkansas seniors.

Overall, the UAMS-COA is open to innovation and actively seeking opportunities that contribute positively to the health of older Arkansans.

## Challenges

- The aging of the state's population coupled with a constantly changing market-based national healthcare model continues to be a primary challenge to the clinical aspects of this agency's mission. Pandemic burnout and labor pressures on the entire healthcare system have added further strain to an already tenuous network of specialized care. Outside of UAMS in Little Rock, there are only two specialized geriatric clinics remaining in the state and only one of these is now easily accessible to COA clients (northwest Arkansas). Nonetheless, the UAMS-COA remains committed to supporting the geriatric medicine workforce, and ensuring that seniors in Arkansas have the best possible access to healthcare services in places where Senior Health Clinic access is unavailable.
- Staffing issues continue to be one of the largest threats to the flow of specialized elder services throughout the state. This impacts both COA staffing and clinic access. Despite progress made by recently filling central leadership positions, the Delta Center and the South Arkansas COA are still missing vital staff and this is limiting service in areas of the state served by these centers. The increased demand for healthcare professionals persistently poses problems for hiring and retention, especially for hiring qualified professionals in rural counties and less-developed portions of the state (e.g., specialists in dementia assessment and management).
- Adequate supervision of COAs in more remote regions of Arkansas has always been a concern of this agency. Efforts have been made to address many of the issues, but keeping staff trained and monitoring activity across the COAs remains challenging.
- Changing racial and ethnic demographics of seniors in some areas of the state necessitate planning for more inclusive communication and the development of bilingual or multilingual materials and programs.



# UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Challenges Continued

- Due to underdeveloped infrastructure, poverty, and small and decentralized populations, the basic UAMS-COA model is more difficult to deploy in some areas of the state. For example, it is estimated that in this quarter, residents of one-third of the 75 counties in Arkansas received no direct services from the UAMS-COA. More effort is needed to find effective modes of delivery for serving seniors in impoverished, hard-to-reach communities. These concerns escalated during the pandemic as an increasing volume of COA client services, out of necessity, shifted to an internet-based model. Client services are unavailable to many in the state who lack reliable broadband Internet access. The effectiveness of online delivery models is also questionable due to lack of resources to fully evaluate these newer service modalities.
- The agency continues developing the data collection and data processing capacity needed to fully assess program outcomes. Much progress has been made on developing a new monitoring system, but some challenges have been exacerbated by the shift to digital training modes. Efforts are underway to develop more standardized measures of health improvement associated with program participation. For example, wellness outcomes are now routinely monitored among participants in the Drums Alive, Walk With Ease, Tai Chi, Ageless Grace, First-Responder Dementia Training, and Family Caregiving programs.
- It may be time to explore and introduce new evidence-based exercise options offered to seniors in the state. Participants have been demanding more variety for several quarters but developing/implementing new programs was made more difficult by disruptions surrounding the pandemic. Some of the current options are hard to monitor for quality and safety using online interaction formats. It is important to continue efforts aimed at comparing the effectiveness of traditional modes of service delivery to newer modes of delivery.
- Many of the programs and services offered through the UAMS-COA have an indirect effect on senior health. The agency continues efforts aimed at demonstrating the net positive impact of services provided by the agency. However, the return-on-investment models have not yet been sufficiently developed. Social and economic disruptions lingering from the pandemic have altered key variables and stalled development of these models.
- As state and federal funding continues to evaporate, as older funding commitments end, and as inflationary pressures rise, maintaining external funding streams is more important than ever. At stake is the continuation of critical programs related to the health and well-being of older adults across Arkansas. The UAMS-COA is currently meeting the funding challenge through a patchwork of grants, awards, service contracts, donations, and volunteer support. However, worries remain about the sustainability of such efforts. The continuous search for new funding is exhausting and depends heavily on the talent and extraordinary effort of the current leadership. Ensuring necessary levels of support over the long-term remains a challenge especially in an economy with high labor costs and erratic investment returns.

# UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Challenges Continued

- Finding the time and other resources necessary to stay current with best practices in geriatric care is an enduring challenge. The UAMS-COA has put great effort into staying connected with professional organizations at the regional and national levels. In order to maintain its high quality programming, the agency is encouraged to continue allocating resources for professional development among the directors and staff.

Overall, the UAMS-COA recognizes its key challenges and has become adept at formulating short-term strategies to address them.

## Evaluator Comments

Prevailing evidence suggests that the UAMS-COA continues fulfilling its mission to advance the state's agenda for successful senior health services, knowledge, and programming in Arkansas. Despite numerous strains on conventional service modalities, the UAMS-COA has enhanced senior health this quarter through the following activities:

- Maintaining alliances between nonprofit, for-profit, and state-funded agencies to better address the needs of older adults in Arkansas;
- Developing digital resources on aging-related issues that help reach broader audiences;
- Educating the community about the special needs of older adults;
- Keeping seniors active by providing exercise opportunities across the state (through multiple platforms);
- Recognizing the necessity of fall prevention and healthy exercise education for seniors and mobilizing resources to meet the need;
- Leading efforts to develop alternative therapies for pain management;
- Leading efforts in mental health and suicide prevention in the state;
- Enhancing the healthcare workforce with geriatric training for medical professionals;
- Working to develop better models of long-term care in Arkansas;
- Working to educate family caregivers and increase the capacity for quality in-home senior healthcare;
- Focusing on dementia care and building dementia-friendly communities; and
- Addressing needs exacerbated by the pandemic such as social isolation and hunger among older adults.

Despite the fact that staffing issues disrupted some of the daily operations in parts of the state this quarter, the UAMS-COA continues to make progress in critical areas and is on a strong trajectory to meet its annual goals.

# UAMS-COA INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

Improve the health status and decrease death rates of elderly Arkansans as well as obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will provide multiple exercise activities to maximize the number of exercise encounters for older adults throughout the state.
  - **Progress: On Track; Influenced by COVID-19**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal, although the effort continues to be impeded by concerns related to the spread of infectious disease including COVID-19. A total of 1,065 exercise encounters with senior Arkansans were counted during this reporting period with encounters distributed across five of the state's seven COAs. The exercise options have been curated by the UAMS-COA to include evidence-based programs such as Ageless Grace, Tai Chi, Drums Alive, and Walk with Ease that address the core concerns of the client population (e.g., physical activity increases, balance/fall prevention, and pain management). A majority of the 1,065 encounters were live, in-person experiences as opposed to Facebook or videoconference methods. Overall, the UAMS-COA provided approximately 185 hours of exercise programming to seniors this quarter. Post-participation data collected by the UAMS-COA demonstrate that substantial numbers of participants in exercise activities report increased activity levels, a substantial reduction in falls, and perceived reductions in pain.
  
- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will implement at least two educational offerings (annually) for evidence-based disease management programs.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. During this quarter, the UAMS-COA offered evidence-based educational programs that addressed a range of health priorities related to aging. This quarter, UAMS-COA staff provided 1,343 hours of educational offerings including 539 hours in critical focal areas: caregiving/dementia training (288 hours), healthy eating/food insecurity (13 hours), mental health/well-being (75 hours), and fall reduction (163 hours).
  
- **Indicator:** On an annual basis, the UAMS Centers on Aging will obtain external funding to support programs in amounts equivalent to ATSC funding for that year.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. In this quarter, the UAMS-COA developed external support from various sources valued at approximately \$693,451. This amount exceeds the quarterly goal of \$439,800 and represents a strong quarter of fundraising.

# UAMS-COA INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Activity continued:** During this quarter, \$414,199 was raised from four different grants to support programming. The most sizable grant received this quarter was a \$354,000 award from USDA to support virtual-reality-based dementia education. Aside from grants, another large stream of funding came from the Schmieding Foundation that provided \$135,652 to support Schmieding Center operations. Additional extramural funding included community partner donations (\$25,128), UAMS core support (\$114,000), and the value of volunteer hours supplied to the COAs (\$25). The agency also received \$4,446 through contractual service agreements. Financial numbers indicate clear efforts to remain active in external fundraising. Overall, the UAMS-COA had a successful quarter of external funding by leveraging \$693,451 above the \$439,800 in quarterly funding provided through the ATSC.

## Short-Term Objective

Prioritize the list of health problems and planned interventions for elderly Arkansans and increase the number of Arkansans participating in health improvement programs.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will assist local healthcare providers in maintaining the maximum number of Senior Health Clinic encounters through a continued positive relationship.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. The UAMS-COA recorded 508 Senior Health Clinic encounters during this quarter (all of these encounters were recorded at the Schmieding Center in northwest Arkansas). There were no recorded nursing home, inpatient, or home visits during this period. Given the diminishing capacity of general health clinics and the limited availability of specialized geriatric care in the state, UAMS-COA is doing the best it can to broker clinical services.
- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will provide education programming to healthcare practitioners and students of the healthcare disciplines to provide specialized training in geriatrics.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. The UAMS-COA produced 563 hours of educational presentations and specialized geriatric training opportunities attended by 266 healthcare practitioners and students during this reporting period (most of these were in-person encounters).

# UAMS-COA INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will provide educational opportunities for the community annually.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Using live events, social media, and other means of communication, the UAMS-COA generated 5,346 community education encounters during this reporting period. While approximately 69% of these encounters occurred in person (3,705), other encounters occurred via telephone or online platforms (e.g., 872 encounters were recorded from Facebook).
  
- **Indicator:** On an annual basis, the UAMS Centers on Aging will develop a list of health problems that should be prioritized and education-related interventions that will be implemented for older Arkansans.
  - **Progress: Met**
  - **Activity:** This indicator has been met for the year and no further progress is needed. Planning for FY24 was completed during the final quarter of FY23. A list of prioritized problems and interventions was generated. The list is identical to the FY23 priorities and includes a continued emphasis on fall reduction and healthy activity, an emphasis on healthy eating and food insecurity, caregiving/dementia training, and mental health/well-being. The COA directors will continue to monitor the current and emerging needs of older Arkansans and make adjustments if necessary.

# UAMS-COA TESTIMONIAL

## Program Praise

One participant in the Individual Medicare Counseling program at the South Central COA shared, "[The program] saved me money by switching my Medicare Advantage Plan."

A Certified Dementia Practitioner training participant at Northeast COA commented, "It taught me a lot more on how to deal with a resident with dementia and Alzheimer's. Helped me on what to say, what to do, and how to deal with the situation!"

Participants in programming at the Schmieding Center (Northwest Arkansas) shared the following:

- "I never could have done what I did without you. So, know that I know that, and know how much I appreciated your help and encouragement. Blessings to you and your team!"
- "Thank you so much for the memory cafe. You did a great job. It was so much fun. Thank you for validating me and who I am."
- "You are so generous with your time and talent! You may not realize how much of a difference you're making in my life, but it's huge!"

# UAMS EAST PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

## **Program Description**

The University of Arkansas Medical Sciences East Regional Campus provides healthcare outreach services to seven counties including St. Francis, Lee, Phillips, Chicot, Desha, Monroe, and Crittenden counties. The UAMS East Regional Campus, formerly known as the Delta Area Health Education Center and UAMS East, was established in 1990 with the purpose of providing health education to underserved populations in the Arkansas Delta region. The counties and populations served by the UAMS East Regional Campus are some of the unhealthiest in the state with limited access to healthcare services being one of the challenges. As a result of limited access and health challenges, the UAMS East Regional Campus has become a full-service health education center with a focus on wellness and prevention for this region. The program has shown a steady increase in encounters with the resident population and produced a positive impact on the health and wellness of the region. Programs to address local health needs of residents are being implemented in partnership with more than 100 different agencies. The overall mission of the UAMS East Regional Campus is to improve the health of the Delta's population. Goals include increasing the number of communities and clients served and increasing access to primary care providers in underserved counties.

## **Program Goal**

The goal of the UAMS East Regional Campus is to recruit and retain healthcare professionals and to provide community-based healthcare and education to improve the health of the people residing in the Delta region.



# UAMS EAST EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## Opportunities

UAMS East Regional Campus was involved in a community meeting with Liberty Dental to discuss dental health in rural Arkansas and were also given the opportunity to inform them about current programming and prevention work with dental health. This meeting included a discussion about the need for dental hygiene supplies and Liberty Dental graciously supplied UAMS East with 400 dental kits to be used in outreach work.

Kayla Mallard, BSN, RN with UAMS East Family Medical Center was selected as the Arkansas Center for Nursing's Top 40 Nurse Leaders Under 40 for 2023 by the Board of Directors for the Arkansas Center for Nursing, Inc. Kayla was honored during a recognition ceremony in Benton, Arkansas.

UAMS East Director, Stephanie Loveless, was granted an opportunity to interview with a national podcast from the University of Stanford called "Century Lives." The program highlighted the work with the Good Food Rx research study and included a discussion about the relationship between diet and obesity interventions in rural Arkansas. The podcast hosts also interviewed a participant from the obesity group during the September nutrition education class.

The UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute has implemented a statewide patient navigation program. UAMS East is excited to announce the Cancer Navigator for the region has been hired and is working out of the UAMS East office and with current UAMS East staff. The navigator will be linking the community with cancer services and help patients access the needed prevention, screening, treatment and support services.

## Challenges

It is a challenge for UAMS East to continue to grow programs or offer additional programming with limited staff. UAMS East has not been able to re-hire positions or add additional staff to take on new programs. Staff are working at full capacity to continue the existing programming. Also, UAMS East has reported limited time to find additional funding opportunities (grants) because they do not have staff with time to focus specifically on grant writing.

# UAMS EAST EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

## **Evaluator Comments**

The UAMS East regional campuses had many successes this quarter. The Family Medical Center enrolled 116 new patients this quarter. Additionally, their patient satisfaction ratings are very favorable, as are the patient comments concerning their care. The diabetes program is exceeding the 100 clients per year set as the expectation for success. Patients in the Good Food Rx program are reporting lowering their A1c as well as their weight. UAMS East continues to provide excellent outreach opportunities to the community through health screenings, health education, exercise programs, car seat safety checks, CPR/first aid, and harm reduction programs for opioid use. Staffing continues to be a challenge. Many of the staff have taken on additional responsibilities to maintain the current programming.

# UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

## Long-Term Objective

Increase the number of health professionals practicing in the UAMS East Regional Campus service areas.

**Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain the number of students participating in pre-health professions recruitment activities.

- **Progress: On Track**

- **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. The UAMS regional recruiters conducted the all-virtual camp Find Your Future in Health Care. This program was for high school students across the state that featured healthcare professionals from each region speaking on their career. Twenty-two students attended the program. State M\*A\*S\*H camps continued through July 2023. The UAMS East recruiter served as the co-state coordinator for M\*A\*S\*H. The UAMS East recruiter spoke to a group of 31 HOSA leaders (Future Health Professionals, formerly known as Health Occupations Students of America) concerning collaborating with their school clubs through speaking and hands-on events. Plans are for the UAMS Education Coordinators to conduct the Find Your Future in Health Care virtual camp during the school year. The first event is scheduled for January 23rd, 2024. Currently there are 19 HOSA chapters registered with 450 students, of which 55 are in the UAMS East region. HOSA is an international career and technical student organization endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education and the Health Science Technology Education Division of ACTE (Association of Career and Technical Education).
- The UAMS East recruiters attended an AHEC (Area Health Education Center) Scholars Physician's Assistant (PA) recruitment in August where they were successful to sign all 40 of the new incoming class this year. The UAMS East recruiter will be the Education Coordinator that works with all PA students throughout their two-year commitment. Recruitment continued through the partnership with Arkansas ACRAO (Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers) college fairs. The UAMS East recruiter has traveled throughout the southeast region to counselor's fair in September where the recruiter spoke with 78 high school teachers, advisors, and career coaches. Through these in-person fairs, recruiters informed counselors about what UAMS Regional Program Education Coordinators can offer their students. Overall this quarter, 472 high school students were provided information through the events. These career fairs will be continuing throughout the month of October.

# UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will continue to provide assistance to health professions students and residents, including RN to BSN and BSN to MSN students, medical students and other interns.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. UAMS East Regional Campus currently has one student in the UAMS Master's program and one BSN student in the Arkansas State University program. Also, this quarter, UAMS M4 student, Amos Noyes, completed his rural primary care rotation in Lake Village. Dr. Joyce Gregory was his preceptor. Also, UAMS M4 student Allen Norris completed his family medicine rotation at Chicot Memorial Medical Center. UAMS East supported the 2023 Annual Gerald J. Glass Memorial Education Program. This continuing education program for pharmacists as well as other professions was held via Zoom with over 100 joining the program. This is a great opportunity for practicing healthcare providers to receive updated information on current topics without traveling.

## Short-Term Objective

Increase the number of communities and clients served through UAMS East Regional Campus.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain the number of clients receiving health screenings, referrals to primary care physicians, and education on chronic disease prevention and management within 10% of the previous year.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. UAMS East Regional Campus provided free biometric screenings to faculty and staff members at four local schools. How Healthy is Your Faculty is a coordinated health education/health screening program designed to offer support, education, and free screenings onsite to local schools. Sixty employees received free blood pressure checks, cholesterol, blood sugar, BMI, and waist circumference and were informed of the other services and programs offered at the UAMS East Regional Campus. UAMS East Lake Village in partnership with Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation provided 45 PSA screening tests to employees at Superior Uniform and Chicot Memorial Medical Center. UAMS East Lake Village held blood pressure screenings for members of the Chicot Memorial Community Center for 67 members. UAMS East Regional Campus also provided free health screenings to community members that were attending the Mobile Food Drop Off. This quarter, screenings were held at Trenton Baptist Church and Christopher Homes in Elaine.
  - UAMS East in Helena and Lake Village provided 211 blood pressure checks, 53 BMI screenings, 65 cholesterol screenings, and 103 glucose screenings. The total number of individuals screened this quarter was 516. Abnormal Screening Results: blood pressure (58), BMI (25), glucose (21), and cholesterols (8).

# UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

■ **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain a robust health education promotion and prevention program for area youth and adults.

- **Progress: On Track**

- **Activity:** This indicator is on track. This quarter, UAMS East provided health education promotion and prevention programs for a total of 8,111 youth and adults. There were 3,725 youth and 4,386 adults that participated in or received health education services.
- UAMS East participated in the Back to School Drive at the Phillips County Boys and Girls Club. Over 300 youth were provided free dental and personal hygiene supplies and school supplies.
- UAMS East was awarded \$22,000 in opioid settlement dollars to provide life-saving Naloxone (NARCAN®) doses and training on its administration to residents of Phillips County. The funding, which comes from the Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership (ARORP), will allow UAMS East and the Phillips County Opioid Task Force to distribute free doses of naloxone to community members in Phillips County. This quarter, UAMS East staff provided Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas faculty and students with training in the use of NARCAN®. Together, 372 faculty members and students were trained.
- UAMS East distributed 250 dental and personal hygiene kits to local partner Boys, Girls, Adults Community Development Center (BGACDC) in Marvell. The community-based organization provides education and programming to youth and adults in Marvell. UAMS East continued the work with the Mobile Food Drop Off and continued providing free biometric screenings and hygiene kits to those receiving food boxes. This quarter, programs were held at Christopher Homes in Elaine and Trenton Baptist Church.
- UAMS East Helena provided worksite wellness to employees of BPS informing them on the dangers associated with vaping. UAMS East, in partnership with Alzheimer's Arkansas, held the "Walking on Sunshine Walk" in Helena with over 100 attendees. UAMS East has been providing health screenings and education in the newly donated Mobile Van. The van has been utilized for outreach efforts at local health fairs, mobile food drop offs, and at local community events.
- UAMS East West Memphis participated in the Back to School Bash with the West Memphis Boys and Girls Club. This event was an opportunity for UAMS to provide information and materials to 350 youth. UAMS East West Memphis continues its partnership with East Arkansas Community Corrections. This includes teaching childcare and safety classes and the Diabetes Education Empowerment Program (DEEP). Through the partnership, UAMS East West Memphis participated in the Correction Center Resource Fair. This allowed an opportunity to provide resources on healthy eating, diabetes, car seat safety, and safe sleep to all 460 residents of the facility. UAMS East West Memphis held car seat checks and installations for six expecting moms.

# UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Activity continued:** UAMS East Lake Village, in collaboration with Desha County Cooperative Extension, offered Cook Smart Eat Smart to 27 people at the CB King Center. This course teaches cooking techniques with an emphasis on healthy preparation techniques, simple ingredients, and limited use of prepared foods. In addition, information is presented to help participants plan, shop, and stock a pantry that encourages simple meal preparation. Each session contains several basic cooking techniques and other topics related to preparing and eating meals at home.
- UAMS East Lake Village and Helena provided American Heart Association CPR and First Aid classes. Heartsaver CPR and First Aid was held for 67 community members including local business employees, school faculty, and daycare providers. Also, Basic Life Support was held for 25 healthcare providers.
- UAMS East Lake Village provided education to 189 employees about physical education and opioids at Chicot Memorial Medical Center through the Worksite Wellness initiative. UAMS East Lake Village also held its annual Firecracker 5K with community members and provided educational materials and resources to all attendees.

■ **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain the number of clients participating in exercise programs offered by UAMS East Regional Campus within 10% of the previous year.

- **Progress: On Track**
- **Activity:** This indicator is on track. This quarter, UAMS East Fitness Center and walking track encounters totaled 6,940. UAMS East has continued group exercise classes. Yoga was conducted for 169 participants and Silver Sneakers classes were conducted for 216 participants. UAMS East Lake Village helps provide support and education to members of the Community Outreach Center. This quarter, there were 1,054 visits at the center. UAMS East held Zumba classes for 107 participants, Line Dancing for 150, and Walk Away the Pounds for 110.

■ **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will provide medical library services to consumers, students, and health professionals.

- **Progress: On Track**
- **Activity:** This indicator is on track. UAMS East Medical Resource Library provided support to healthcare professionals and students through literature searches and teaching materials. This quarter, 11 nursing students and 10 other healthcare professionals utilized the library. UAMS East Library also provided support to 1,709 consumers and circulated 42 books and 47 audio-visuals. Also, 11 electronic searches were conducted. UAMS East Library provided assistance to Entergy for an employee health fair. The library also provided resources to Counseling Services for use with patients and provided information to be used with the Forrest City Community Health Fair. Information was provided on vaping, cholesterol, stroke, and driving and texting.

# UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will plan and implement a Rural Residency Training Track for Family Medicine in Helena, in partnership with the UAMS South Central residency program.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. UAMS East Family Medical Center (FMC) is slowly trying to build the foundation for the RRT. The UAMS East FMC must increase patient volume before applying. As there has been a change in ownership of the local hospital, UAMS East is in the process of building a relationship with the new owners.
  
- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will increase the number of patient encounters by 5% annually at the UAMS Family Medical Center in Helena.
  - **Progress: On Track**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The UAMS East FMC continues to serve the area as a patient-centered medical home clinic where patients can be referred to two health coaches for smoking cessation, weight loss, and chronic disease management. The FMC had a total of 859 patient visits and 116 new patients in 60 days of clinic this quarter. UAMS East FMC was closed during the end of May for three days due to citywide water issues. FMC staff are utilizing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention measures to improve the health of the Delta population.
  - The UAMS East Family Medical Center NRC patient survey summary for the past quarter detailed that the FMC met and exceeded benchmark standards for care. Those care standards included the following: the provider listened, the patient trusts the provider with their care, and nurses explained things. For overall patient satisfaction, 96.8% of patients that responded would likely recommend the clinic. The FMC exceeded the targeted goals this quarter for patient visits with 94% of patients completing a tobacco screening and 83% patients having an up-to-date foot exam. The targets are 90% and 60% respectively for these metrics.
  - UAMS East FMC continues its commitment to the Patient-Centered Medical Home Program (PCMH). The FMC receives information on Utilization Measure Performance from Arkansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield and has met several of the quality metrics for performance of controlling blood pressure, HbA1c, breast cancer screenings, and antidepressant medication management.
  - UAMS East continues its work with the Good Food Rx program, a food as medicine program. UAMS East is working with 20 FMC patients to encourage participants to make dietary changes by increasing consumption of nutritious foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, and reducing food insecurity by making it easier for participants to access nutritious foods. To date, participants have completed their nutritional assessment surveys, the nutrition class, and their second biometric data collection. Retention is remaining steady and clients have expressed that they will miss the education session and monthly food as the program moves into the second year of the study in April of 2024.
  - Finally, UAMS East Health Coaches provided coaching to 31 referred clinic patients.

# UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will provide diabetes education to at least 100 community members annually.
  - **Progress: Exceeding Expectations**
  - **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations towards the annual goal. UAMS East Regional Campus provided diabetes education and outreach to over 65 community members. UAMS East West Memphis provided the Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP) to 115 women.



# UAMS EAST TESTIMONIAL

## Program Praise

- "I had a great experience during the Lake Village rural family medicine course! Dr. Parks was a wonderful preceptor and an excellent teacher throughout the month. All of the other staff that I worked with were welcoming and helpful. Lake Village Clinic and Chicot Memorial Medical Center provided a great view of how important family medicine physicians are to small communities and rural areas. Overall, I was able to see good cases in both the clinic and the hospital, and I also learned about the benefits and challenges that come with rural medicine." Allen Norris, UAMS M4 Student
- "Dear Mrs. Loveless, thank you again for serving as a panel speaker for our Community Experience Lunch Forum, especially on short notice. It is always great to hear from people who work in and with the community to improve their well-being. I hope we can stay in touch and discuss future collaborations between your organization and the Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention." Sharon Sanders, PhD, MPH, CHES
- "My A1c dropped from 8.3 to 6.4 and I've lost 31 pounds" Good Food Rx participant in the Obesity Group
- "Everyone I came in contact with was kind to me. Mr. Lauren Reeves, the APRN that attended me was excellent, patient and kind. She was very attentive to all my concerns. The nurse that administered my labs and my injection was equally kind and compassionate." UAMS Family Medical Center Patient
- "I love Dr. Norris! She listens to me and doesn't rush me. I feel like she actually cares." UAMS FMC patient
- "Dr. Amber Norris is my physician. We have established a friendship. I trust Dr. Norris and want to thank her." UAMS FMC patient

# SUMMARY

Across all programs, the vast majority of indicators (97%) were on track to meet annual goals. Programs evaluated at the end of FY23 in this report (ABI) met five of seven indicators. In all, 21% of indicators were influenced by COVID-19 (see Table 1).

## Explanation of Unmet Indicators

- **Arkansas Biosciences Institute**

- ABI's indicator related to publications and presentations was unmet. While the number of publications (536) was almost double the annual goal (290), the number of presentations fell short (310 out of the goal of 370). These activities were, in part, influenced by COVID-19.
- Similarly, the indicator related to full-time equivalent jobs fell short. The ABI supported 206 FTE jobs in FY23, which is below the annual goal of 300 FTEs. However, ABI did partially meet the indicator goal as 65% of jobs in FY23 were supported by extramural funding. ABI may need to explore a revision to this indicator as the goal of 300 FTEs has not been met since FY19.

ATSC-funded programs continued to provide educational opportunities, services, research, and funding support to boost health and well-being in Arkansas. Six of seven programs were on track to meet annual goals and the ABI, which is evaluated at the end of the fiscal year, met a majority of its goals. Some challenges reported by the programs included staff and resource shortages as well as ongoing obstacles related to the pandemic, though these obstacles are becoming less severe each quarter. Evaluators also reported that programs continue to recruit and collaborate with external partners, some in other sectors, to reach the state's most vulnerable populations. Programs that are focused on education and research also have continued robust efforts to train future public health practitioners and produce new scientific knowledge. In all, the tobacco-funded programs this quarter contributed to Arkansas's culture of health.

# SUMMARY

**Table 1. Indicator Progress Across Programs**

PROGRAM	TOTAL INDICATORS	MET	UNMET	EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS	ON TRACK	IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT	COVID-19 INFLUENCED	OVERALL PROGRESS
ABI (FY23)	7	5	2	--	--	--	2	71% Met
COPH	9	1	--	--	8	--	--	100% On Track or Better
MHI	7	--	--	--	7	--	5	100% On Track
TPCP	18	--	--	--	18	--	--	100% On Track
TS-MEP	5	--	--	--	5	--	5	100% On Track
UAMS-COA	7	1	--	--	6	--	1	100% On Track or Better
UAMS East	9	--	--	1	8	--	--	100% On Track or Better
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>97% On Track or Better</b>
							<b>TOTAL COVID-19 INFLUENCED</b>	<b>21% COVID-19 Influenced</b>

# REFERENCES

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