



Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission

January-March 2025 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

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ABOUT THE ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION



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

UAMS 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 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.

ATSC COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Andrea Allen, Commission Chair

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



Ken Knecht, MD, Commission Vice Chair

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

Martha Hill, Commission Executive Committee Member

Counsel
Attorney General Appointee

Jerri Clark, Commissioner

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

Jennifer Fowler, Commissioner

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

Cristy Sellers, Commissioner

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

Justin White, MD, Commissioner

Emergency Physician
Healthcare Professional selected by Speaker of the House of Representatives

Zsanica Wiggins, Administrative Analyst

EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

Emily Lane, PhD, MFA

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



COMBINED EFFORTS TO BUILD 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)

EDUCATION



COMMUNITY ENCOUNTERS 27,702
MHI, TPCP, UAMS-COA, UAMS EAST



STUDENTS ENGAGED IN PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS 1,520
UAMS EAST



HEALTH PRACTITIONERS & STUDENTS EDUCATED 660
ABI, COPH, GASP, TPCP, UAMS-COA, UAMS EAST



PRESENTATIONS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH COPH 5



DRINKING WATER PROTECTIONS



DRUG USE



ANTIBIOTIC PRESCRIBING BEHAVIOR



UAMS-COA LEADERS TEACH SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS

Four teaching participants, three from the UAMS-COA, took part in an ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) teaching seminar dealing with Applied Suicide Prevention. The 2-day workshop focused on learning the tools on how to recognize someone that may be thinking of suicide. They taught those in attendance how to intervene and keep those contemplating suicide safe.

SERVICE



VULNERABLE ARKANSANS SERVED THROUGH TS-MEP 11,373



HEALTH SCREENINGS 4,033
MHI, UAMS EAST



2,248 CLINIC ENCOUNTERS
UAMS-COA, UAMS EAST



11,803 EXERCISE ENCOUNTERS
UAMS-COA, UAMS EAST



809 ENROLLED IN TOBACCO CESSATION VIA BE WELL



CONNECTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

UAMS East in Lake Village held a "Stay the Course" workshop at the Dermott Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the workshop was to bring community members together to ensure adequate access to mental health services in Chicot County by facilitating introductions and relationships between community partners who are directly involved in and affected by the mental health outcomes of Chicot County.



COMBINED EFFORTS TO BUILD 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)

RESEARCH

DIVERSE RESEARCH TOPICS



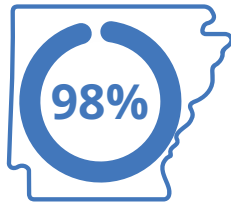
Research activities at **ABI** and **COPH** included a wide range of topics, such as nutrition and obesity, tobacco cessation, cancer screenings, stress reduction for correctional officers, hypertension management, rice fortification, and air and water quality improvements, among others.



RESEARCH PROJECTS FOCUSED ON ARKANSAS



COPH



ARKANSAS PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH



The **COPH** is using its Arkansas Prevention Research Center for Women's Health to address the state's high rates of maternal mortality. The center is one of 20 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Centers funded by the CDC. The center will conduct a core research project, engage community partners to address public health priorities, and build prevention research capacity. The research will be conducted in south Arkansas in areas that are rural and have the biggest need for primary care and maternity services.



Wendy Nembhard, PhD, (left) and Carol Cornell, PhD, (right) are the multiple principal investigators for the center.

DATABASE PROVIDES RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES



ABI's agreement with the Arkansas Insurance Commission and the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) has allowed research faculty at ABI member institutions access to the Arkansas All Payer Claims Database, a legislatively-mandated central repository for health insurance claims data from all major public and private health insurance providers in Arkansas. ABI's director is collaborating with UAMS Human Resources, ABI institutional directors, and ACHI, to identify alternative methods to simplify the onboarding process for researchers. This will significantly enhance access to the database for all users.



ECONOMIC IMPACT



\$52.3 Million

TOTAL CLAIMS PAID

TS-MEP



\$37.2 Million

FEDERAL MATCHING FUNDS LEVERAGED

TS-MEP



\$622,302

LEVERAGED

UAMS-COA

UAMS | Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging

CENTERS ON AGING



\$30,564

COMMUNITY PARTNER DONATIONS

UAMS-COA



\$354,000

USDA AWARD TO SUPPORT DEMENTIA EDUCATION

UAMS-COA



UAMS EAST RECEIVES GIVING TREE GRANT

The Arkansas Community Foundation and its local office, the Southeast Arkansas Community Foundation, awarded Chicot Memorial Medical Center and **UAMS East** Lake Village a Giving Tree grant of \$ 2,000 to help purchase a video laryngoscope system. This advanced medical instrument is designed to facilitate the intubation process of providing a visual representation of the airway, which can significantly improve the success rate of intubation and reduce the risk of complications.



COMBINED EFFORTS TO BUILD 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)

TESMONIALS



Arkansas Biosciences Institute: *"ABI funding has contributed significantly to investigators obtaining extramural research grants of more than \$100 million since 2012 when the center was established. . . . ABI support has been key in the success of our center, as reflected in this extraordinary level of funding by the center's investigators." -- Mark Smeltzer, PhD, director of the UAMS Center for Microbial Pathogenesis and Host Inflammatory Responses and professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and Department of Orthopaedic Surgery*



UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health: *"The [Arkansas Prevention Research Center for Women's Health] is an important resource for Arkansas. This is an invaluable project for a variety of reasons, but most notably it will make people healthier. Maternal mortality is important. High blood pressure is important. Together, we'll address those two things through this project." -- Wendy Nembhard, PhD, MPH, professor and chair of the UAMS COPH Department of Epidemiology*



Arkansas Minority Health Initiative: *"I'm looking forward to comparing my [health screening] numbers today to last year's numbers. Thank you for sticking my finger for free!" "Last year my PSA was good. Hopefully it will be this year too. Thank you for offering this for us." "I hope that you will be able to continue to have this expo each year. Thank you for checking my sugar and blood pressure." -- Participants from the Chicot Memorial Medical Center Worksite Wellness*



Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program: *"Thank you [ARTEI] for your participation in the annual UAM Wellness Fair. Your involvement helped to make this year's Wellness Fair an outstanding success! Our count indicates that 200 students, faculty, and staff attended the fair. Many participants commented that the Fair was both educational and fun! This is due to your expertise, time, and creativity invested to create your unique interactive booth! We truly appreciate your donation of time, knowledge, personnel, creativity, and energy!" -- Julie Gentry, director of Intramurals & Recreation at University of Arkansas at Monticello*



UAMS Centers on Aging: *"Just wanted to thank you again for your time and attentiveness this morning. Your reminders of planning joy and 'living in their world' and using distractions are something I really needed. Thank you for giving encouragement and making me feel more like I have reliable and wise resources through the adjustments with my Mom and Dad." -- Family caregiver responding to assistance from the Schmieding Center*



UAMS East Regional Campus: *"I really liked this class. I learned the basics of diabetes and also ways to manage your diabetes, how it affects your body when it's not controlled, and tips to control it better. I really am glad you provided handouts. It's a lot of information to remember so the handouts give me something to keep and refer back to." -- Participant in diabetes education program*



PROGRAM PROGRESS AND EVALUATION



ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

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.

Arkansas BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE



ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES

Due to the challenges faced by ABI researchers outside of UAMS in accessing the Arkansas All-Payer Claims Database (APCD), which necessitates undergoing a UAMS onboarding process to obtain a UAMS email address, ABI Executive Director Dr. Bobby McGehee is collaborating with UAMS Human Resources as well as ABI institutional directors and Kenley Money, the Director of Information Systems Architecture at the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI), to identify alternative methods to simplify this process. Once a solution is established, it will significantly enhance access to the database for all users.

CHALLENGES

According to the data use agreement established with ACHI and the Arkansas Insurance Department (AID), researchers seeking direct access to the APCD must possess a UAMS email address. This requirement can present challenges. Employees of the University of Arkansas face a less complicated process as they are already integrated into the UA system, whereas researchers from Arkansas State University must undergo onboarding through the UAMS Human Resource Department, which is a time-consuming procedure.

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

The investigative researchers at ABI member institutions consistently demonstrate strengths in research, scientific collaborations, publications, and business opportunities. Their efforts enable scientists, researchers, and clinicians to tackle important health challenges that affect Arkansans. Funding provided by the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement is leveraged in such a way that the state is a destination for science and a growth center for knowledge-based jobs and industry. Many of the researchers not only contribute to the current body of knowledge but serve as mentors to students who will be the next generation of scientists investigating ways to improve the quality of lives of citizens and communities. In summary, the activities of ABI researchers indicate that all indicators will be achieved by the end of the current fiscal year.

ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE TESTIMONIAL

ABI INVESTIGATORS LEVERAGE ATSC FUNDS

Mark Smeltzer, PhD, director of the UAMS Center for Microbial Pathogenesis and Host Inflammatory Responses and professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, shared the following: “ABI funding has contributed significantly to investigators obtaining extramural research grants of more than \$100 million since 2012 when the center was established.”

The center has been funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences with three consecutive Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) grants totaling \$27 million, and ABI funds have been critical to the center’s overall success, he said.

ABI support has enhanced the center’s development and retention of researchers by providing additional pilot funding for early career researchers and bridge funding to support more experienced researchers who are between extramural grants.

“ABI support has been key in the success of our center, as reflected in this extraordinary level of funding by the center’s investigators,” Smeltzer said.

ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

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.

#1 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: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. Research scientists at the five institutions continue to invest funds to begin pilot projects, access core laboratories, employ research technicians, buy equipment, and develop collaborations. These efforts result in strong preliminary data and provide the infrastructure to make extramural grant applications successful. Activities to document accomplishment of this indicator are in progress. Data will be provided by each member institution at the end of the fiscal year.

#2 INDICATOR

ABI-funded research will lead to the development of intellectual property, as measured by the number of patents filed and received.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. Research projects culminating in unique intellectual property and commercial applications that are eligible for patent protection are in progress. Results of filings and patents awarded to ABI investigators will be reported at the end of the fiscal year.

#3 INDICATOR

The ABI will promote its activities through various media outlets to broaden the scope of impact of its research.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. Efforts to disseminate successes within the ABI scientific community through newspaper articles, press releases, news conferences, and radio/television contacts are in progress. Data regarding the distribution of information about ABI research activities through various media as well as scientific publications will be reported at the conclusion of the fiscal year.

ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE

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.

#4 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: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track. Funds provided to the five member institutions continue to advance the research of ABI investigators. All research projects are monitored, ensuring that activities are timely, cost-effective, and within the scope of the researchers' defined agenda. Data regarding specific activities of each institution will be provided at the end of the fiscal year.

#5 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: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. ABI researchers publish their findings in peer-reviewed scientific and medical journals and book chapters. These publications serve as the primary mechanism for the dissemination of research within the scientific community. Presentations and symposia provide additional venues for sharing new, current research findings as well as an additional opportunity for interactions between members of the scientific community. ABI researchers are continuing their efforts toward the development of new or improved research methods and tools with the potential to further future scientific inquiry. Data regarding the dissemination of research results will be reported at the end of the fiscal year.

#6 INDICATOR

Employment supported by the ABI and extramural funding will be maintained at a baseline of 200 full-time equivalent (FTE) with at least 65% of the FTE supported by extramural funds.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. The Arkansas Tobacco Settlement (ATS) monies and associated extramural funds continue to support a range of knowledge-based positions including research support personnel, post-doctoral research fellows, biostatisticians, and animal care technicians. Full-time equivalent jobs directly supported by ATS monies as well as extramural funds will be reported at the end of the fiscal year.

ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#7 INDICATOR

The ABI will facilitate and maintain research collaboration at a level of 20% - 25% among member institutions.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. The ABI continues to provide support and facilitate research collaboration to solve the multifaceted health problems that affect the health of Arkansans. Specific data regarding the building and success of these research collaborations will be reported at the end of the current fiscal year.

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

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.



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

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES

The UAMS College of Public Health has pursued and created a variety of opportunities to further its mission of excellent health education, research, and service. Many of those opportunities are summarized elsewhere in the report. Below, one example of these opportunities is summarized by Kev' Moye (2025a), a journalist working for UAMS.

The UAMS Fay W. Boozman of College of Public Health is using its Arkansas Prevention Research Center for Women's Health to address the state's high rates of maternal mortality.

Established in September 2024, the center is funded by a five-year, \$5 million grant from the CDC. Wendy Nembhard, PhD, MPH, professor and chair of the college's Department of Epidemiology, is the lead multiple principal investigator (MPI). Carol Cornell, PhD, professor in the college's Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, serves as the other MPI of the center. The center is one of 20 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Centers funded by the CDC.

According to Nembhard, the center will conduct a core research project, engage community partners to address public health priorities, and build prevention research capacity. Regarding its foundational research, the center's focus is pregnancy-associated hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. Nembhard and Cornell hope that the project will ultimately reduce maternal mortality, pregnancy-related deaths and pregnancy-associated deaths in Arkansas. "There's no reason for women to die from something as natural as giving birth," Nembhard said. "Pregnancy should not be a life-or-death situation. However, it is for many women in Arkansas. High blood pressure matters, and a person has to take care of it."

Additionally, women who have hypertension during a pregnancy often develop negative health outcomes after they give birth. They are also at risk of having a stroke or a heart attack. "The health department maternal mortality review board discovered that cardiovascular diseases, including hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, are among the leading causes of maternal mortality in Arkansas," Nembhard said. "Through the center targeting hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, we're attempting to reduce Arkansas's maternal mortality rates."

Currently, Arkansas has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the nation. Elected officials—and numerous Arkansas health organizations—have deemed the situation in need of immediate solutions, according to Nembhard. "If pregnant women learn to recognize that they have hypertension during pregnancy, they can receive treatment that helps to prevent other health outcomes associated with that condition."

The center's research will be conducted across south Arkansas in areas that are rural and have the biggest need for primary care and maternity services, based on data from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

Participants in the study receive a blood pressure cuff and a monitor. They record their blood pressure readings electronically. If it is determined that they have hypertension, their health provider will follow up with appropriate treatments.

The center is partnering with the Arkansas Birthing Project, the Arkansas Department of Health and other groups to help participants use an evidence-based intervention, such as self-monitoring their blood pressure. Collaborating with health organizations and community partners in the rural areas is not only vital to conducting the research but also important for building trust with the residents and spreading the word about the study.

"If we can implement this in the rural parts of Arkansas, we could then expand it throughout the state," Nembhard said. "We're testing three different models. The idea is that at least one of the models will prove successful. In south Arkansas, in Union County, we're partnering with a health care provider," she said. "In the Delta, we're heavily relying on community partners to get the word out. In the southwest part of the state, we're collaborating with the Arkansas Health Department's clinics. We're taking three different approaches to find out which is the best way to reach women and make inroads into the rural communities. Hopefully, we'll find that all three models are effective, allowing us to use all three based on the characteristics of a county."

Helping pregnant women track their blood pressure and understand why it is important that they monitor their numbers is key to saving lives and making the entire state healthier. "The center is an important resource for Arkansas," Nembhard said. "This is an invaluable project for a variety of reasons, but most notably it will make people healthier. Maternal mortality is important. High blood pressure is important. Together, we'll address those two things through this project."

CHALLENGES

The COPH continues to face challenges in its mission; a significant new challenge in the January-March quarter is extensive and abrupt cuts to grants and contracts funded by the federal government. The COPH is facing uncertain future research funding due to evolving policy changes at the national level. The College receives a significant amount of research funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), both of which have sustained significant reductions in personnel and funding. As of March 31, 2025, the COPH received notice that three research projects would no longer be funded, and all project activity should immediately cease. The abrupt closure of these grants resulted in a loss of approximately \$2.5 million in funding.

External funding (grants and contracts) makes up more than half of COPH's budget and directly funds its research activities and provides some support for research-related education programs. It is unknown what further policy changes or funding cuts will occur and how they may impact the college. This uncertainty has created an atmosphere of anxiety among the staff and faculty; however, the COPH continues to focus on its mission to improve the health and well-being of all Arkansans through public health education, research, and service.

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

The COPH is on track to meet all of its annual goals. In the January-March quarter, faculty continued to be heavily involved in health-focused organizations as well as conducting health-related research. The COPH continues to prioritize community outreach and providing public access to health-related resources. Nearly all of their work is directly related to the health of Arkansans and/or conducted in Arkansas. Despite recent cuts to research funding, the COPH remains determined to continue its mission to contribute to Arkansan public health.

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONIAL

COPH GRAD PROMOTES BENEFITS OF VEGAN FOODS

The UAMS COPH has conducted substantial community outreach over the January-March quarter. Testimonials from one of those outreach efforts to promote healthy eating are summarized below by Kev' Moyer (2025b), a journalist for the college.

Tionna Jenkins, PhD, MPH, is making a significant impact in Arkansas as she inspires individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles. Jenkins, an alumna of the UAMS COPH's health policy and management program, is a public health practitioner, consultant, and owner of Plate it Healthy, a plant-based, vegan food business. Her food truck, Plate it To Go, brings healthy, delicious options to communities. Furthering her mission to promote wellness, Jenkins partners with corporations, businesses and communities to help bridge health gaps, provide nutrition solutions and address food deserts.

"I've always known I wanted to help people through healthcare," she said. "But I never imagined it would be through public health or running a food business focused on health and wellness."

A native of Little Rock, Jenkins spent much of her childhood in Camden, Pine Bluff, and Magnolia. These four diverse locations played a crucial role in shaping her career in public health. "From an early age, I became aware of the lifestyle differences between rural and urban populations," she recalled. "I realized that people in certain areas and populations had better access to healthcare, healthy foods, and quality education. Seeing what people did—or did not—have access to because of their zip codes and neighborhoods left a lasting impact on me."

Raised in a middle-class household where both of her parents were educators, Jenkins' life changed dramatically when her father died of a heart attack in his 30s. She was only a preteen at the time. In 2021, she experienced another significant loss when her mother passed away from diabetes and kidney failure. The deaths of her parents due to chronic illnesses fuels Jenkins' passion for helping others lead healthier lives.

"I've always wanted to find solutions to chronic health issues," she said. "I want that to be part of my legacy. That is why I chose public health."

Jenkins, who earned a biology degree from Philander Smith University, a PhD in Public Policy with a specialization in health from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and a graduate certification in Nonprofit Management from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock was among the first group of people to get a Master of Public Health degree from the UAMS COPH. She deems her journey into public health as serendipitous. After graduating from Philander Smith University, Jenkins was working on a project with her mentor at UAMS, when she noticed a book on public health on his desk. This sparked a life-changing conversation.

"My mentor, Dr. Billy Thomas, told me he was returning to school to earn an MPH," she said. "He explained that as a doctor, he could only see patients one-on-one, but by working in public health, he could change systems and influence entire communities. He could also impact public policy and help people change harmful behaviors. That is when I decided I would pursue an MPH too."

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
TESTIMONIAL

COPH GRAD PROMOTES BENEFITS OF VEGAN FOODS (CONTINUED)

Jenkins described the pursuit of her degree as challenging, especially since few people were familiar with the MPH program at the time. “It was intense,” she said. “In the early 2000s, most people did not know what the MPH program was, except those already in the medical field. Most of my classmates were older professionals with established careers. Transitioning from undergrad to graduate school with classmates much older than me was tough. But through prayer and perseverance, I completed the program, specializing in health care policy.”

She credits her undergraduate and graduate professors and mentors for their role in her success. “I had some incredible professors who were instrumental in ensuring that we were well-rounded and knowledgeable about population health,” Jenkins said. “They were thorough, intense and made sure we mastered the material.”

Her education at UAMS laid the foundation for her work in public policy. “Thanks to my public health education, I had the opportunity to work alongside national leaders, including U.S. presidents, legislators, and in various philanthropic spaces,” she said. “It also enabled me to become a public health practitioner and consultant. As an entrepreneur, I’ve been able to specialize in the food industry, with a focus on wellness, addressing food deserts, identifying gaps in access to nutrition and health care, and providing practical solutions. UAMS taught me how to apply public health to all these areas, which is why I am so passionate about serving healthy foods to the community.”

After completing her degree, Jenkins worked with Joe Thompson, MD, MPH, when he was Arkansas’s surgeon general, focusing on obesity policy and legislation. Thompson is the president emeritus of the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI). Jenkins has also held various roles addressing healthcare policies at the local, state, and federal levels. However, it is her vegan food business, co-owned with her husband, that has garnered her the most recognition.

The business emerged from Jenkins’ own transformation after using plant-based foods to lose 80 pounds. “After having our second daughter, I struggled with weight loss,” she said. “I was overweight, stressed, and began experiencing chest pains. I did not want to have a heart attack like my father. A doctor advised me to change my lifestyle. I set boundaries and changed my environment. I stopped eating processed foods and began researching the foods that could help me lose weight and thrive internally,” she continued. “Eventually, I embraced a plant-based diet, gradually removing meat, cheese, and other unhealthy processed foods. I lost weight and began sharing my journey with others. People asked me to teach cooking classes, and that led to the business we have today.”

Jenkins, a vegan for more than a decade, is grateful that her personal experiences and education have aligned to help her achieve her goal of promoting healthy living. “Food addiction is real,” she said. “I am thankful that offering healthy food options has become a part of my life’s work. I love showing people that there are solutions to health and wellness through the food we choose to eat and how we consume it.”

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

Elevate the overall ranking of the health status of Arkansans.

#1 INDICATOR

Through consultations, partnerships and dissemination of knowledge, the CPH 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. During the January-March quarter, CPH faculty reported involvement with 147 different health-related organizations, committees, task forces, and panels. In these collaborations, CPH faculty participated in activities such as serving as contributors and consultants for health-related groups; presentations on health-related topics to public, professional, and lay audiences; partnerships with health-related community groups and public health practitioners; and memberships in health-related professional organizations. The scope of these organizations ranged from local to international, but primarily focused on Arkansas and Arkansans.

#2 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 2024-2025 Biennial Report.

#3 INDICATOR

Research conducted by CPH 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 January-March quarter, CPH faculty engaged in 62 grants and research projects, 61 of which (98%) were based in and/or focused on Arkansas. Student research data were unavailable for this quarter. These projects and grants cover a wide range of health-related topics, including reducing tobacco use, implementing cancer screening programs, reducing stress among correctional officers, and reducing childhood obesity.

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#4 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. In the January-March quarter, a large majority (61 of 62, or 98%) of research projects and grants were based in and/or focused on Arkansas.

#5 INDICATOR

The COPH makes courses and presentations available statewide.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Information on distance-accessible courses are not provided for the January-March quarter. Five presentations were made publicly available via remote access, covering topics such as drinking water protections, social determinants of antibiotic prescribing behavior, and monitoring of Arkansas wastewater for infectious diseases and drug use.

#6 INDICATOR

Twenty percent of enrolled students at the COPH come from rural areas of Arkansas.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track. Data on this indicator are not provided for the January-March quarter, and will be presented in the next quarterly report.

#7 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. Data on this indicator are not provided for the January-March quarter, and will be presented in the next quarterly report.

#8 INDICATOR

The majority of COPH alumni stay in Arkansas and work in public health.



PROGRESS: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track. Data on this indicator are not provided for the January-March quarter, and will be presented in the next quarterly report.

UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE

Obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

#9 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: On Track

Activity: This indicator is on track. Data and evaluation of this indicator are reported in the July-September quarterly report.

ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

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.



ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE

EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES

The MHI continues to capitalize upon the topics and issues that are most important to its priority population. The agency takes advantage of educational and screening opportunities including those related to social media campaigns and live events, the Mobile Health Unit, as well as strong efforts to reach more people and work with new partners each quarter. Five new partners were secured this quarter that will bring a variety of new events in the coming quarters. Furthermore, five new activities were held that increased the number of educational encounters and screenings. In all, the MHI has taken advantage of staff positions being filled and multiple new partnerships, including CATCH, College Hunger Summit, Learn More At the Grocery Store, Vestida Rojo, and Jack and Jill of Little Rock.

CHALLENGES

Heart disease continues to be a top challenge as the number one cause of death for minority Arkansans, and MHI continues to fight this battle with awareness campaigns via multiple outlets and in-person educational and screening events to combat heart disease. However, the most pressing challenge for MHI at this time is the Mobile Health Unit. It is undergoing repairs and upkeep including installment of awning control arms, sealing the back wall, servicing the sewer lines, and adding a new wrap. Despite challenges, the MHI remains an important presence in the fight to reduce death/disability due to tobacco, chronic, and other lifestyle-related illnesses by providing education and screenings to Arkansans.

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

During this quarter, MHI continued its outreach efforts and has increased significantly all its numbers in all media categories, offering thousands of Arkansans the opportunity to gain crucial information regarding overall health, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, breastfeeding, mental health, food insecurity, and maternal health, among other topics. Additionally, the MHI has taken advantage of outreach efforts to provide an increase in the number of screenings and education related to the debilitating diseases commensurate with tobacco use and unhealthy lifestyles. MHI has already met its annual goal in all but one area (measuring weight). Taking advantage of filled positions and new partnerships has benefited the MHI with the hosting of multiple new events as well as continuing multiple programs where thousands of minority Arkansans received health information and screenings that will help them decrease their level of health risk. Even with the challenges of fixing and servicing the MHU, it still maintained at least half of all screenings and educational material given out. With new partnerships and positions filled, the MHI is overcoming past challenges and providing vital services and information that will help minority Arkansans reduce death/disability due to tobacco, chronic, and other lifestyle-related illnesses.

ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE TESTIMONIAL

PRAISE FROM PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

A participant at the Crittenden County Wellness Fair hosted by Crittenden County Cares shared the following:

- “It was a fully loaded, bite-sized benefit to all in attendance, including me! If you are not taking advantage of the services offered by Crittenden County Cares, you are missing out!”

Participants at the LRAC–Delta Sigma Theta event shared the following:

- “I appreciate the purpose of the event, the healthy snacks, and the heart health education materials.”
- “The overall energy and the availability of health screenings made the event feel impactful and intentional.”

Participants from the Chicot Memorial Medical Center Worksite Wellness Round 10 shared the following:

- “I’m looking forward to comparing my numbers today to last year’s numbers. Thank you for sticking my finger for free!”
- “Last year my PSA was good. Hopefully it will be this year too. Thank you for offering this for us.”
- “I hope that you will be able to continue to have this expo each year. Thank you for checking my sugar and blood pressure.”

Participants at the I Care Community Outreach Health Fair shared the following:

- “I just want to say ‘thanks’ for the health screenings. It really helped me know where my health is at, and I appreciate [MHI] looking out for us.”
- “I am thankful to I Care for the hygiene bags, food, and clothes. It means a lot to have people who care and help out when you need it.”

ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

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

#1 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: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations towards the fiscal year goal. Efforts related to this indicator are described below.

- MHI's continued robust campaigns to raise awareness and provide access to screenings throughout the state is noteworthy this quarter. Each screening not only increased from last fiscal year, but screening numbers nearly doubled. MHI continues to work with a variety of organizations and partnerships to increase the number of Arkansans with access to educational materials regarding healthy living, screenings, and awareness. For example, its continued partnership with the Arkansas Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association allowed MHI to provide a physician twice per month on radio stations that target the communities it serves. This quarter, these physicians provided health education that answered specific questions from individual callers regarding topics such as cervical cancer and heart disease. Other partnerships included CATCH, College Hunger Summit, Learn More At the Grocery Store, Vestida Rojo, and Jack and Jill of Little Rock, all of which provide opportunities for raising awareness and providing access to screenings. Moreover, nearly half of screenings and educational encounters came from partnerships with multiple counties.
- MHI increased its activities to raise awareness through educational literature, media campaigns (social media, TV, and radio), screening events, and Mobile Health Unit (MHU) events. This quarter, the agency was able to provide health education and materials to more than 1,500 Arkansans in 37 counties and a total of 3,947 health screenings, an increase of nearly 250% from this quarter last year; 65% of the screenings were provided by the MHU.
- Further, MHI has put considerable effort into its media production. Through multiple radio and TV stations, over 400 commercials aired about health-related topics. Also, MHI's social media influence continues to be strong with hundreds of thousands of views and over-the-top streaming ads. This quarter, the MHI increased social media views nearly 8,000 for a total of approximately 85,000 views. The MHI's top Facebook posts included (a) thank you's to one of its partners in northwest Arkansas, the Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese, for hosting a Women's Conference and providing valuable information and screenings; (b) a mini-grant application for health-related events; and (c) news of a partnership with Arkansas Hunger Relief which hosted the "Learn More at the Grocery Store" activity at Edwards Food Giant where it focused on healthy foods on a budget. The MHU also provided vital education and screenings. Similar postings on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) were significant with thousands of views. Topics included warming centers and women's and maternal health topics.

ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

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.

#2 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: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations towards the annual goal. The MHI continues to work toward its screening goals with an additional 893 blood pressure screenings this quarter, an increase of 150% compared to the previous fiscal year. Furthermore, the MHI educated more than 1,500 Arkansans this quarter through events and educational literature (a 250% increase). Also, specific to stroke awareness, the MHI ran hundreds of television commercials encouraging exercise and abstaining from tobacco use. With staff positions being filled and partnerships increasing, the MHI is well positioned to fulfill this indicator.

#3 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: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations toward the fiscal year goal. Hypertension is an increase in blood pressure, and through the efforts of community screening events and the MHU, the MHI provided 893 blood pressure screenings this quarter. Additionally, the agency supplied educational materials related to hypertension across the state via multiple community events in just over half of the state's counties, as well as through all types of media (social, radio, TV).

#4 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: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations. The agency provided 670 cholesterol screenings, over 200 more than each of the previous quarter, with more than 1,500 educational encounters. Furthermore, 400 radio and 1,000 television commercials ran that focused on heart disease prevention by encouraging exercise and quitting smoking. Additionally, 300,000 over-the-top streaming impressions were displayed in just this quarter.

ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#5 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: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations towards the annual goal. During this quarter, MHI focused heavily on diabetes awareness. One way it exceeded expectations toward this goal was by airing 1,000 television commercials that encouraged exercise and illustrated the importance of Arkansans knowing their glucose numbers. The agency also provided 877 glucose screenings with more than 1,500 educational encounters in 37 Arkansas counties.

#6 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 and will be completed in FY25. Results are forthcoming. As always, the MHI continues to put efforts forward to provide education to minority Arkansans through various media outlets. This quarter, the program focused its social media messaging on food insecurity, improving maternal health, the Southern Ain't Fried Sundays program, the importance of "knowing your numbers", stroke awareness, HIV, and diabetes. All media outlets garnered over 85,000 views and more than 300,000 over-the-top streaming impressions.

#7 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. Planning for Camp iCan is underway. It will involve a three-day program with activities, workshops, and exercises that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and self confidence. Workshops will equip campers with the necessary tools to understand and combat key risk behaviors that lead to unhealthy lifestyles. Further information will come in a future evaluation report.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (TCP) includes community and school education prevention programs, enforcement of youth tobacco control laws, tobacco cessation programs, health communications, and awareness campaigns. The TCP 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 TCP 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 TCP 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 TCP 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.



TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES

The Minority Research Center (MRC) shared that it has partnered with the Graduate Addiction Studies Program (GASP) to conduct a research study related to the increase in vaping across the state. Additional information will be forthcoming in future reports. TPCP provided its virtual Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) Training through the MD Anderson Cancer Center in February to 40 attendees. Additionally, TPCP community sub-grantees provided 166 presentations to a total of 6,036 attendees. Sub-grantee ARTEI (Arkansas Tobacco Education Initiative) provided vaping and tobacco-related information and presentations across the state at schools including Mountainburg's Middle School and High School, White Hall School District, Elmwood Middle School, and the University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical College. Other ARTEI presentations during this quarter were provided to a wide range of audiences at such locations as the Park Plaza Health and Wellness Fair, Women's Leadership Network Kickoff, 21st Annual UAMS MidSouth Black Expo, and Healthy Pope County Coalition Meeting.

CHALLENGES

Staff from TPCP sub-grantee ARTEI mentioned challenges in scheduling and promoting events after the holidays due to time constraints and everyone still "getting back in the swing of things." However, community events and requests for presentations are expected to pick up again after a few months.

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

Near the end of January, follow-up emails were exchanged with the directors of TPCP, GASP, MRC, and MISRGO in regards to the face-to-face meetings held in September 2024 to discuss the need for any indicator changes. These emails led to the conclusion that the agencies at UAPB (MRC, MISRGO, and GASP) only needed the yearly resetting of the goal dates to the end of the next fiscal year, while a more detailed discussion of the third long-term indicator necessitated a virtual meeting with TPCP. This virtual meeting was held on February 19 with Director Joy Gray and Marika Curengton. At this meeting, we all agreed that it would be best to request the deletion of the third long-term indicator: "By June 2025, the number of comprehensive smoke-free/ tobacco-free policies will increase from 219 to 400." This indicator assumes that TPCP has the power to create and implement programs in communities, and does not fit with the current long-term goal of using survey data to demonstrate a reduction in smoking and tobacco use in Arkansas. Thus, we will make a request to delete this long-term indicator at the April 1, 2025 meeting of the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM

TESTIMONIAL

PROGRAM PRAISE FROM ARTEI STAFF AND EVENT PARTNERS

Numerous testimonials were offered by ARTEI staff highlighting its activities at various wellness fairs and schools while representing its agency as well as the positive comments it has received from the community:

- ARTEI staff Sierra shared: "I was happy to be able to represent the Arkansas Tobacco Education Initiative and meet with the CDC staff member, Shawna Shields, during the ADH site visit in October. I was able to communicate the ways in which our program with TPCP promotes tobacco control and improves the health of Arkansans. Shawna shared with me, 'It was so lovely meeting you and hearing your presentation.'"
- Sierra also shared an email from Crystal Brown, a teacher at Sherwood Elementary. Ms. Brown stated, "Good morning [Sierra], I hope all is well. Last year you came and did a vaping presentation for the 5th grade students at my school. I would love for you to come again and do another presentation on vaping for 5th grade this school year. I was hoping to be able to get on your schedule in late April or early May. Please let me know if you are available. Have a great day!"
- ARTEI staff Tori shared: "I enjoyed being a part of this team and feel very welcomed. I've never worked with a more helping group, and for that, I appreciate the team. I've been able to network and work with some amazing people not only in Pine Bluff but also surrounding areas."
- ARTEI staff Melissa received a note from Julie Gentry, director of Intramural and Recreation at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, who shared, "Thank you for your organization's participation in the annual UAM Wellness Fair. Your involvement helped to make this year's Wellness Fair an outstanding success! Our count indicates that 200 students, faculty and staff attended the fair. Many participants commented that the Fair was both educational and fun! This is due to your expertise, time, and creativity invested to create your unique interactive booth! We truly appreciate your donation of time, knowledge, personnel, creativity, and energy! We hope you enjoyed the fair and plan to join us again next year! Thank you for your support of wellness on our campus!"

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

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

#1 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 FY25.

#2 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 FY25.

#3 INDICATOR

By June 2025, the number of comprehensive smoke-free/ tobacco-free policies will increase from 219 to 400.



PROGRESS: Pending Deletion

Activity: As discussed in previous reports, this indicator has not been useful in meeting the above-stated long-term objective. A virtual meeting was held in January with representatives of TPCP to examine options and it was determined that the best outcome would be to request the deletion of the indicator at the April ATSC meeting. Please see the Evaluator Comments section for additional information.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE

Communities shall establish local tobacco prevention initiatives.

#4 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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 third quarter, community sub-grantees provided 98 presentations to approximately 2,325 attendees. These presentations covered such topics as the following: the economic burden of tobacco use, current and emerging tobacco/nicotine products, and dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke with strategies for decreasing exposure. While statewide sub-grantees did not conduct any presentations, the opportunities section identifies training planned by TPCP and statewide sub-grantees.

#5 INDICATOR

By June 2025, maintain the sales-to-minor violations at 6.5% or below (Baseline in FY19 = 6.3%).



PROGRESS: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations at this time. In the FY24 Q4 report, for the first time post-pandemic, the sales-to-minor noncompliance rate fell below the goal of 6.5% (5.97%). This quarter, 1,687 compliance checks were completed by the Arkansas Tobacco Control (ATC) and there were 100 sales-to-minor violations for a noncompliance rate of 5.93%. Thus, the sales-to-minor noncompliance rate continues to hold below the goal level of 6.5%. Also, this quarter there were 16 online complaints and 18 that were called in to the 1-877-ID-TEENS number. Finally, ATC held seven training sessions for retailers and store owners with 15 attendees.

#6 INDICATOR

By June 2025, Project Prevent will establish seven new school chapters within the Red Counties (Red Counties are those counties with low life expectancy).



PROGRESS: In Need of Improvement

Activity: This indicator is not on track to meet the goal of establishing seven new school chapters within Red Counties. No new chapters were set up in Red Counties this quarter. As mentioned in previous reports, a meeting was held on September 12, 2024, with TPCP and Project Prevent representatives to discuss the usefulness of this indicator. At that time, the Project Prevent representative asked to keep the indicator one more year. If no chapters are established in the fourth quarter, there will be a need to look into why the indicator was not met and what new indicator may better tap into the activities of Project Prevent.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM

EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#7 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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 FY25.

#8 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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 1,575 calls inquiring about tobacco cessation, hypertension, and/or diabetes. A total of 809 individuals enrolled in the tobacco cessation program. Additionally, the BWA Call Center mailed out 112 diabetes and 291 hypertension pamphlets as requested by callers. The quit rate will be reported annually in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year.

#9 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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, 22 women enrolled in the Be Well Baby program. There were a total of 83 sessions; 77 sessions were with mothers and six were supplemental sessions. The counseling sessions involved 47 prenatal meetings and 29 postnatal sessions.

#10 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. They are planning for No Menthol Sunday on May 18, 2025. The theme for this year's event is "Clear the Way." MISRGO is partnering with the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Arkansas in reaching faith-based institutions concerning participation in this event.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#11 INDICATOR

By June 2025, the MISRGO will execute an annual event that supports the mission of the program and report on funded and non-funded attendees.



PROGRESS: Met

Activity: This indicator has been met. The 22nd Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference was held in March. There were 196 registrants, 187 of which were not funded by MISRGO. Additionally, 112 participants attended the Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference for the first time. A total of 58 evaluations of the conference were completed. Ninety-five percent of the respondents rated the event as either excellent (67%) or above average (28%).

#12 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. Planning began in March for the new “Hate the Vape” tours. Schools may schedule 30, 45, or 60-minute presentations from March through May for students in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades. The tour is an interactive presentation that discusses disparities in vaping use and abuse among youth in the state. Also, MISRGO continued its Cultural Conversations workshops. The two held during this quarter are as follows: “Tobacco Prevention & Cessation in the Marshallese Community” by Richard Laraya (Ruthie Johnson, Facilitator) and “To Vape or Not to Vape. . . That is the Question?” by Josie Shapiro (Cassie Smith, Facilitator).

#13 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. Two proposals have been funded for FY25: An exploration of e-cigarette use among current and former African-American college students by Principal Investigator Dr. Carmen Hardin, Philander Smith University, and Arkansas collegiate substance use assessment: Assessment of minority tobacco and addictions by Principal Investigator Dr. Derek Slagle, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

#14 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. The MRC held a face-to-face meeting with individuals attending the 3rd Annual Black Family Wellness Expo. Information was shared on targeted marketing and how tobacco products can be hidden in plain sight. There were approximately 200 attendees.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM

EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#15 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. The initial planning meeting with the marketing team occurred this quarter. Currently, the submission of the open editorials is scheduled for May. Possible topics include tobacco use and mental health, vaping incidence, and vaping and pregnancy.

#16 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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 the third quarter, two new students were recruited into the GASP. No students graduated from the program (graduations occur during the second and fourth quarters), nor did any students receive stipends this quarter.

#17 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. Although work on this indicator was paused during this quarter due to the completion of the third phase of the Student Stipend Program (October-December 2024) in Workday (the new business management system for the University of Arkansas system), the following components of a juvenile justice tobacco prevention curriculum were identified:

- An initial orientation of any person conducting the tobacco prevention training at the detention center,
- Development of material suitable for youth 9-18 years of age,
- Development of material suitable for both men and women,
- Development of material suitable for in-person as well as online education,
- Development of material targeted at African-American youth from an Afrocentric perspective,
- Development of material educating youth about specific targeted marketing campaigns directed at African-American youth by Big Tobacco,
- Development of material educating young people about the historical use of menthol cigarettes,
- Development of material educating young people about the harmful effects of tobacco,
- Development of material to conduct pre- and post-participation in tobacco prevention to assess what youth learned.

Work on this project is expected to begin again in the fall semester of 2025.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#18 INDICATOR

By June 2025, 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. Adding voiceovers to the presentations was scheduled for this quarter; however, like with the above indicator, the work was paused this quarter due to the completion of the first cycle of the Student Stipend Program in Workday during October-December 2024. Work on this project is expected to begin again in the fall semester of 2025.

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

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.



Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM EVALUATOR SUMMARY & 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 more than 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 decreases in the Pregnant Women Expansion population and the Hospital Benefit Coverage population may be the result of stabilizing numbers after several quarters of increasing numbers being served. There was also stability in the number of persons with developmental disabilities being served with all 500 TS-MEP funded slots being filled again during this quarter. The lifting of the extending of health coverage during the public health emergency can possibly explain the continued increases in ARSeniors population during this quarter.

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

The Arkansas Department of Human Services will demonstrate improved health and reduce long-term health costs of Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

#1 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

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. 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 11,373 eligible pregnant women, seniors, qualified adults, and persons with developmental disabilities. This is an increase of 442 persons served over the previous quarter. Total claims paid for the TS-MEP populations this reporting period were \$52.3 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 \$37.2 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.

#2 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: In Need of Improvement

Activity: This indicator is in need of improvement to meet the annual goal. During this quarter, there were 1,901 participants in the TS-MEP initiative Pregnant Women Expansion (PWE) program. This is a very slight decrease of eight women being served from the previous quarter. This stability from the previous quarter may reflect the settling of 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 PWE program totaled \$2,107,391.47.

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#3 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: In Need of Improvement

Activity: This indicator is in need of improvement. The TS-MEP initiative Hospital Benefit Coverage (HBC) provided inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits to 861 adults aged 19-64. This is a decrease of 209 adults served over the previous quarter. The HBC program had a significant decrease during the public health emergency due largely to suspended cost share requirements for day one hospitalizations. However, we have seen steady increases since the lifting of the public health emergency. The decrease this quarter may be the result of adjusting to a new health environment. Traditional Medicaid covered 20 hospital days per year for qualified adults; the HBC program has increased the number to 24 days and reduced the copay on the first day of hospitalization from 22% to 10%. TS-MEP funds for the HBC totaled \$4,082,548.76.

#4 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

Activity: This indicator is on track. The ARSeniors program expanded Medicaid coverage to 8,108 seniors this quarter, a significant increase of 658 seniors. The ARSeniors program serves Arkansans 65 years or older that have incomes at or below 80% FPL. 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. Also, 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 \$7,063,207.57 during this quarter.

#5 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

Activity: This indicator is on track. This quarter, 503 individuals were provided services through TS-MEP funds, a slight increase of one person served from the previous quarter; however, this program continues to fill the 500 TS-MEP funded slots. While there are only 500 funded slots, there were 503 unique individuals served because of participant turnover. A total of 40 children (18 and under) and 463 adults in 71 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 \$39,033,088.66 in this quarter.

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

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.



CENTERS ON AGING

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING EVALUATOR SUMMARY & 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:* While UAMS-COA headquarters are located in Little Rock's Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, additional COAs are located in El Dorado, Fort Smith, Helena-West Helena, Jonesboro, Pine Bluff, Springdale, and Texarkana. This enables the agency to address distinct needs that emerge in different regions of Arkansas. Investments in social media and other methods of contact have helped expand the agency's reach in areas that have been traditionally underserved.
- *Quality of services:* In the past two years, the UAMS-COA has received national recognition for its excellent training and education programs. The quality of agency services has also been recognized by inclusion in the UAMS Vision 2029 plan for improving health in Arkansas.
- *Service innovation:* The agency continues to innovate the delivery of services. This includes pursuit of grants to fund innovative projects such as the FOUND project which provides wandering kits (scannable QR-enabled medical ID bracelets, educational materials, and instructional videos) to individuals with dementia, caregivers, and first responders. UAMS-COA is advancing collaborations with faith-based groups to extend the range of respite services available to caregivers. Another innovative project involves expanding the hiring and training of Community Health Workers to supplement services in areas where nursing professionals are overworked or unavailable.
- *Raising awareness:* The UAMS-COA continues raising awareness about the challenges of aging in Arkansas. Agency representatives continually pursue public relations opportunities to combat ageism, encourage successful aging practices, distribute information about Medicare, promote elder-care as a function of healthy communities, and generally celebrate the contributions of older adults in the state. This quarter, UAMS-COA staff have helped draw attention to issues such as food insecurity, dementia, ageism, elder abuse, and senior housing issues. Staff have also provided training to first responders designed to help them better recognize and provide services for people with dementia. Representatives from UAMS-COA share their expertise by presenting at conferences including the American Society on Aging and the Institute for Digital Health and Innovation.
- *Partnerships:* The UAMS-COA continues to foster 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. Particularly promising are partnerships with the Arkansas Alzheimer's Association, research partnerships with the UAMS College of Nursing Hartford Center of Excellence in Geriatrics, the UAMS Department of Psychiatry, and local service partnerships with the UAMS College of Physical Therapy in Northwest Arkansas and the UAMS COPH.
- *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 social isolation of seniors.

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

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

CHALLENGES

The UAMS-COA reported several challenges this quarter, and these are described below.

- The aging of the state's population coupled with a constantly changing national healthcare model challenges all aspects of this agency's mission. The pressures on the clinical aspects of the agency are particularly acute. Labor market shortages in the healthcare system have added further strain to an already tenuous network of specialized care. Outside of UAMS in Little Rock, there is only one other specialized geriatric clinic in the state (Northeast Arkansas). Another traditional staple of the agency, CNA training, has also been negatively impacted by new training regulations and broader health system trends. UAMS-COA remains committed to supporting specialized geriatric treatment, but external factors are playing an outsized role in determining how the support model operates.
- Staffing issues continue to be one of the largest threats to the flow of specialized elder services throughout the state. Despite progress made by recently filling vacant leadership positions across the state, new vacancies continue to interrupt the operations of the agency. The increased demand for healthcare professionals creates obstacles 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 progressed with respect to 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 necessitate planning for more inclusive communication and the development of bilingual or multilingual materials and programs.
- Due to poverty, an underdeveloped infrastructure, and small and decentralized populations, the basic UAMS-COA model is more difficult to deploy in some areas of the state. While services are distributed across several regional Centers on Aging, older adults who do not live in close proximity to a COA likely experience difficulties engaging with services. More effort is needed to find effective modes of delivery for serving seniors in impoverished, hard-to-reach communities. An increasing volume of COA client services, out of necessity, has shifted to an Internet-based model. However, client services are unavailable to many in the state who lack reliable broadband Internet access.
- The agency continues improving the capacity needed to fully assess program outcomes, but the shift to digital training modes has introduced new complications. Wellness outcomes are now routinely monitored among participants in the Drums Alive, Walk with Ease, Tai Chi, Ageless Grace, First Responder Dementia Training. The next challenge will be to maintain a consistent collection of data so that long-term assessment of outcomes is possible.
- It may be time to explore and introduce new evidence-based exercise options offered to seniors. Participants have been demanding more variety for several quarters but developing/implementing new programs was made more difficult by staff turnover. Some of the current options are hard to monitor for quality and safety using online 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 UAMS-COA continues efforts aimed at demonstrating the net positive impact (including the economic impact) of services provided by the agency. However, valid return-on-investment models have not yet been sufficiently developed. Continued staffing concerns along with changes in the healthcare landscape have stalled development of these return-on-investment models.

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

- 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.
- 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.

Many of this agency's external challenges remain the same or have increased in intensity over the last few quarters. Fortunately, the UAMS-COA recognizes its key challenges and continues finding short- and middle-term strategies to address them.

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

Evidence suggests that 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, 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;
- Utilizing digital resources on aging-related issues that help reach broader audiences;
- Educating the community about the special needs of older adults;
- Conducting research on the effectiveness of senior support activities and models;
- Keeping seniors active by providing exercise opportunities (through multiple platforms);
- Recognizing the necessity of fall prevention and healthy exercise education for seniors and mobilizing resources to meet the need;
- Leading efforts in mental health and suicide prevention in the state;
- Enhancing the healthcare workforce with geriatric training for medical professionals;
- Providing information to family caregivers to help increase the quality of in-home senior care;
- Focusing on dementia care and building dementia-friendly communities; and
- Addressing needs 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 well situated to meet its annual goals.

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING **TESTIMONIAL**

PRAISE FROM FAMILY CAREGIVER

A family caregiver responding to assistance from the Schmieding Center (Springdale) shared the following: "I just wanted to thank you again for your time and attentiveness this morning. Your reminders of planning joy and 'living in their world' and using distractions are something I really needed. Thank you for giving encouragement and making me feel more like I have reliable and wise resources through the adjustments with my Mom and Dad."

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

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

#1 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

Activity: This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. A total of 1,323 exercise encounters with senior Arkansans were counted during this reporting period. Exercise opportunities were well distributed with encounters counted at five of the seven regional Centers on Aging. All 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. Exercise programming addresses many of the core concerns of the client population (e.g., physical activity increases, balance/fall prevention, and social isolation). A majority of the 1,323 encounters (63%) were live, in-person experiences as opposed to Facebook or videoconference methods. Overall, the UAMS-COA provided approximately 170 hours of exercise programming to seniors this quarter. Post-participation data collected by 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.

#2 INDICATOR

The UAMS Centers on Aging will implement at least two educational offerings (annually) for evidence-based disease management programs.



PROGRESS: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator is exceeding expectations. 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 625 hours of educational offerings including hours in critical focal areas such as caregiving/dementia training (337 hours), healthy eating/food insecurity (36 hours), mental health/well-being (42 hours), and instruction in exercise/fall reduction (211 hours).

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#3 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: Exceeding Expectations

Activity: This indicator exceeds expectations. In this quarter, the UAMS-COA developed external support from various sources valued at approximately \$622,302. This amount exceeds the quarterly goal of \$485,949 and represents a solid quarter of fundraising. During this quarter, \$391,695 was raised from three 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 \$73,697 to support Schmieding Center operations. Additional extramural funding included community partner donations (\$30,564) and UAMS core support (\$114,000). The agency also received \$12,293 through contractual service agreements with other agencies. Financial numbers indicate clear efforts to remain active in external fundraising. Overall, the UAMS-COA had a successful quarter of external funding by leveraging \$136,353 above the \$485,949 fund leveraging goal for the quarter.

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.

#4 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: In Need of Improvement

Activity: This indicator is in need of improvement. The UAMS-COA recorded 1,015 Senior Health Clinic (SHC) encounters during this quarter (all of these encounters were recorded at the Northeast COA). There were no recorded nursing home, inpatient, or home visits during this period. Due to external factors that have limited availability of specialized geriatric care in the state, the UAMS-COA is only meeting the stated goal in Northeast Arkansas. The UAMS-COA is technically "maximizing" SHC encounters, but this is only due to the diminished capacity of such encounters. Despite its best efforts, the agency is no longer capable of sustaining the legacy model of SHC services throughout most of the state. It is time to revisit this particular objective and consider modifying the UAMS-COA approach to cultivating opportunities for specialized senior healthcare.

UAMS CENTERS ON AGING EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#5 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. The agency continues to prioritize the education of healthcare practitioners across the state. The UAMS-COA produced approximately 1,133 hours of educational presentations and specialized geriatric training opportunities attended by 402 healthcare practitioners and students during this reporting period. A high proportion of the educational encounters were in person and, in this quarter, a majority of encounters were concentrated in three COAs (South Arkansas, Texarkana, and Schmieding).

#6 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 6,543 community education encounters and 236 in-service encounters during this reporting period. Approximately 39% of these encounters occurred in person with other encounters occurring via distance platforms (e.g., 3,515 encounters were recorded from Facebook).

#7 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 FY25 was completed during the final quarter of FY24. A list of prioritized problems and interventions was generated. The list is identical to the FY24 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.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

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.



**East Regional
Campus**

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS EVALUATOR SUMMARY & COMMENTS

OPPORTUNITIES

UAMS East Regional Campus will be providing clinical space for Dennis Developmental Center Outreach Clinic that will be held at UAMS East campus. This is a wonderful service for families and children in the area.

UAMS East Regional Campus is working with and supporting the local GEAR UP program of Phillips Community College University of Arkansas by providing educational speakers for programs, attending career fairs at local high schools, and assisting as needed in additional programming. This partnership is very beneficial because some of the students in this program have applied and been accepted for the M*A*S*H summer camps. This has provided the program an opportunity to recruit at the local high school.

UAMS East Regional Campus in Lake Village recently applied to the Arkansas Community Foundation and its local office, the Southeast Arkansas Community Foundation for a Giving Tree Grant of \$2,000 to help purchase one video laryngoscope system. This advanced medical instrument is designed to facilitate the intubation process of providing a visual representation of the airway, which can significantly improve the success rate of intubation and reduce the risk of complications.

CHALLENGES

Meeting the needs of clients and communities with limited staff remains the biggest challenge. UAMS East Regional Campus in Helena has two outreach staff members, and the director is serving a dual role in outreach and supervision. The West Memphis site also has only two staff members and the Lake Village office has one staff member that provides instruction.

EVALUATOR COMMENTS

UAMS East demonstrated significant community engagement and educational outreach during the first quarter of 2025, focusing primarily on planning activities and partnership development. The campus maintained strong collaborative relationships with local institutions. Notable recruitment and educational activities included participation in the HOSA 2025 convention and participating in career fairs. The campus also supported current health profession students through various programs.

Community health services and wellness programs remained robust throughout the quarter, with the campus providing comprehensive health screenings and education to youth and adults. Health screening services reached community members across various venues, including farm worker meetings, workplace wellness programs, and community events. The campus expanded its fitness and exercise programs, continuing group classes like yoga and Silver Sneakers despite staffing challenges. While the UAMS East Family Medical Center successfully maintained patient care visits and achieved a 99% Press Ganey satisfaction score, the Rural Residency Training Track faced setbacks due to insufficient patient volume and changes in local hospital status, requiring continued development efforts.

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS **TESTIMONIAL**

PROGRAM PRAISE

UAMS East Regional Campus reported several testimonials this quarter. These are highlighted below.

- "I enjoyed finding out the different ways to manage diabetes, because it makes me feel like I can be an active participant in my family member's health now that I know how to help them."
- "I really liked this class. I learned the basics of diabetes and also ways to manage diabetes, how it affects your body when it's not controlled, and tips to control it better. I really am glad you provided handouts. It's a lot of information to remember so the handouts give me something to keep and refer back to."
- "I have learned a lot in this class. I will be mindful to keep everything in their original containers and labeled. Refreshing my CPR skills and Heimlich was a huge plus."
- "Thank you so much for participating in Central High School's College and Career Fair! Your willingness to share your expertise made a big impact on our students. We received much positive feedback after the fair, as students shared their ideas about their education and career goals with their peers, teachers, and parents."

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

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

#1 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. Several noteworthy programs and events occurred in this quarter and are presented below.

- The UAMS East Regional Campus was busy with planning activities for the upcoming months the first quarter of 2025. Partnership with Phillips Community College of University of Arkansas's (PCCUA) Pillow Thompson House continued with the business etiquette luncheon for 10 Barton High School seniors. The UAMS East Recruiter collaborated with the coordinators from UAMS South Central and South to host a Day in the Life on the campus of the University of Arkansas in Monticello (UAM). The partnership with UAM has grown in the past years, and this year 57 students attended from six counties. Additionally, there was an informational event for pre-professional students with 12 students attending.
- The UAMS East Recruiter attended the HOSA 2025 convention in February where they had 1,350 students and teachers in attendance. UAMS East Regional coordinators helped with the registration and judging of competition tests as well as presenting prizes to first place winners in each division. Several mock interviews and personal statement reviews were conducted for pre-professional students applying to a variety of graduate programs, including medical school. UAMS East staff attended the Delta Gear UP Career and College Fair for 120 Central High School students. Information on various careers was presented as well as information about the upcoming M*A*S*H program being held in partnership with PCCUA.
- UAMS East Regional Campus West Memphis attended the Career and Technical Education Pathway Expo at the Academies of West Memphis and spoke to 70 students about the upcoming summer M*A*S*H program in Crittenden County.

#2 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. UAMS East Regional Campus currently has one student in a UAMS master's program. This quarter, UAMS East Regional Campus also had one student graduate from the LPN program at Phillips Community College. UAMS East Regional Campus had five students participate in rotations through the practical nursing program, phlebotomy, and RN programs at PCCUA.

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE

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

#3 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 screenings and education to farm workers during a farm production meeting held at the Lon Mann Research Station. Over 25 farm workers were provided biometric screenings including blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose. During a heart health luncheon, UAMS East provided six people with blood pressure and cholesterol screenings. Participants were provided education on heart health which included information on eating healthy and exercising. UAMS East Lake Village provided worksite wellness to 39 employees of Chicot Memorial Medical Center. Employees were provided health screenings and opportunities/resources to engage in wellness behaviors and health risk reduction. UAMS East partnered with Engaging Arkansas Communities in West Memphis to provide HIV testing to eight adults. UAMS East provided screenings to 16 community members attending an AARP community event at the local community center. Participants were provided education on chronic disease management and disease prevention. This quarter, a total of 86 health screenings were conducted. This includes blood pressure, BMI, cholesterol, glucose, and waist circumference. Abnormal results include: blood pressure (18), cholesterol (21), glucose (5), BMI (24), and waist circumference (12).

#4 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 Regional Campus provided health education promotion and prevention programs for a total of 11,256 youth and adults. There were 4,621 youth and 6,635 adults that participated in or received health education services. Several of these efforts are described below.

- UAMS East hosted a Healthy Heart Lunch and Learn during American Heart Month. During the program, participants were offered free health screenings, healthy heart tips, and were provided a heart healthy lunch. UAMS East had the opportunity to offer 15 college students a First Aid and Safety course during the spring semester. UAMS educators provided instruction on many topics including nutrition, first aid, CPR, drug/alcohol prevention, and disease prevention. UAMS East also finished teaching its Kids for Health program in Helena to 160 youth.

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS

EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

- **Activity (Continued):** UAMS East in Helena provided American Heart Association CPR and First Aid classes. Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED® classes were held for 76 community members including staff of Phillips County Developmental Center and Mid-Delta. Basic Life Support was held for 12 local healthcare providers.
- UAMS East in Lake Village held a “Stay the Course” workshop at the Dermott Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the workshop was to bring community members together to ensure adequate access to mental health services in Chicot County by facilitating relationships between community partners who are directly involved in and affected by the mental health outcomes the area. The course was provided twice a week for a total of 150 participants.
- UAMS East staff attended the local THRIVE initiative to work towards opening a grocery store in Helena area to promote access to healthy food. UAMS East is offering insight on what healthy shopping would look like once the grocery store is implemented in downtown Helena (which sits in a food desert). This project is in the planning stages and is projected to be implemented in 2026. UAMS East staff attended Marvell/Elaine’s Mustang Madness Event. This after school event was an opportunity for community agencies to provide information to parents and students. UAMS provided students with an informational flyer about programs and services. Over 200 students attended the event. UAMS East in Lake Village also hosted a virtual Baby Safety Shower for 12 women. Women receive education on safety issues and injury prevention.
- UAMS East in Lake Village and West Memphis provided four car seat checks and installations this quarter. With each check, the caregivers are educated on the proper use and installation of the seat and the importance of using it correctly every time. This is a partnership through the Child Passenger Safety Education (CPSE) Program of Arkansas Children’s.
- UAMS East in West Memphis provided information on heart health to 160 students in the 3rd and 4th grade at Herbert Carter Global Community Magnet. Students were provided instruction on the heart and they participated in an activity to determine how much faster the heart beats after exercise and why. The West Memphis educator taught students about the importance of proper handwashing and how germs spread to 120 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade at West Memphis Christian School. UAMS East in West Memphis continues its partnership with East Central Arkansas Community Corrections (ECACC) providing childcare safety and parenting classes. This quarter, five classes were conducted with 15 students for a total of 120 encounters. The four-class series for child safety discusses top causes of infant/child death and prevention, reviews proper car seat use and installation, considers issues with teenage driving, and teaches CPR. Also, this quarter, UAMS East in West Memphis provided parenting classes for parents who are inmates at ECACC. There were 20 women who completed eight, two-hour classes for 160 encounters. The class covered family dynamics, developmental milestones for children, and communication and discipline techniques. Additionally, they conducted parenting classes for community parents whose children are in DHS custody. These parents have been mandated to attend these classes by the court system. In this quarter, 20 community members in Crittenden and St. Francis counties participated for a total of 40 encounters via Zoom.
- The director at UAMS East in West Memphis participated in a project recently for the campus that focuses on bringing people together to learn through self-reflection, build relationships through structured dialogue, and create change through systemic analysis.

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#5 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 Regional Campus Fitness Center/walking track encounters totaled 6,990. UAMS East continued its group exercise classes this quarter. In January, the yoga instructor quit without notice. Another instructor was hired and she began in February. Yoga was conducted for 210 participants this quarter while Silver Sneakers classes have been conducted for 362 participants. UAMS East in Lake Village helps provide support and education to members of the Community Outreach Center. Through this partnership they have helped provide exercise equipment and classes for the community. This quarter, there were 2,675 encounters. This number includes residents that took part in individual workouts and/or group fitness classes. Some of the classes provided were Senior Fitness, Spinning, Step Aerobics, and Muscle Madness. UAMS East in Lake Village collaborated with the Desha County Cooperative Extension to offer exercise classes to the McGehee Methodist Church. This collaborative partnership began nine years ago for seniors and is enjoyed by many. UAMS East in Lake Village has provided exercise equipment for these classes, floor mats, resistance bands, and weights. During this quarter, 243 citizens attended classes. UAMS East in Helena offered a new yoga class (Easy Yoga) for beginners. Also, this quarter, UAMS East provided Line Dancing for members during the month of March.

#6 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: In Need of Improvement

Activity: This indicator is in need of improvement. UAMS East Family Medical Center (FMC) is slowly trying to build the foundation for the Rural Residency Training Track. The FMC must increase patient volume before applying. Patient volume has increased slightly, but is not at the level to begin a program. The status of the local hospital has changed since last quarter. The local Community Foundation is managing the hospital and all departments are closed except the emergency room, lab, and x-ray.

UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS EVALUATION OF INDICATORS

#7 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 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. UAMS FMC had a total of 1,233 patient visits in 60 days of clinic this quarter. This includes virtual visits, transplant labs, and provider visits. There were 146 new patients this quarter. UAMS East FMC staff are utilizing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention measures to improve the health of the rural Delta population. The FMC continues its commitment to the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) program.

- UAMS FMC filled a position for an access coordinator this quarter. UAMS East health coaches provided coaching to 27 clinical patients. Also, health coaches provided smoking cessation to three patients. This is an eight week smoking cessation coaching program. Patients received helpful tips and motivation to quit tobacco and were provided nicotine patches and/or nicotine gum at no cost. All three patients completed the program and quit smoking successfully.
- UAMS East FMC RN and Community Health Worker, working through the P5 THRIVE grant with the UAMS Institute of Community Health Innovations, continued the work of reaching parents of young children. This quarter, UAMS FMC has begun offering prenatal care. Through this partnership, P5 THRIVE has made a significant impact on the care that is provided for patients who are five years old and younger. Early screening and intervention has become a priority as developmental screenings, postpartum depression screenings, and Autism screenings have been added to well-child visits. This new partnership has addressed many needs of the patients at the UAMS East clinic. Dr. Amber Norris continues seeing patients at UAMS East one day a week. A Press Ganey survey of the UAMS FMC on provider performance was scored at 99%. Scores included benchmarks above 96% for ease of scheduling appointments, wait time at clinic, courtesy of the registration staff, and ease of contacting.

#8 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. UAMS East provided diabetes education and outreach to 17 community members at a local senior center day program. UAMS East in West Memphis continued providing the Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP) to 120 participants.



SUMMARY OF QUARTERLY PROGRESS

PROGRESS OF INDICATORS ACROSS PROGRAMS

During the January-March 2025 quarter, 55 of 61 (or 90%) of indicators were reported as on track, exceeding expectations, or already met for the year (see Table 1). Five of the remaining six indicators were reported as in need of improvement to meet annual goals. One indicator is up for deletion, pending the April 2025 ATSC meeting. An explanation of indicators in need of improvement or pending deletion is provided below.

TABLE 1

Indicator Progress Across Programs

Program	Indicators	Met	Exceeding Expectations	On Track	In Need of Improvement	Pending Deletion	Overall Progress
ABI	7	--	--	7	--	--	100% On Track
COPH	9	--	--	9	--	--	100% On Track
MHI	7	--	5	2	--	--	100% On Track or Better
TPCP	18	1	1	14	1	1	89% On Track or Better
TS-MEP	5	--	--	3	2	--	60% On Track
UAMS-COA	7	1	2	3	1	--	86% On Track or Better
UAMS East	8	--	1	6	1	--	88% On Track or Better
<i>Combined</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>90% On Track or Better</i>

EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT OR PENDING DELETION

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program

- An indicator related to the creation of new Project Prevent chapters in Red Counties was reported as in need of improvement. No new chapters were set up this quarter. TPCP and Project Prevent have agreed to keep this indicator through the end of FY25 to assess if progress is made. If no progress is made, these agencies will reconvene and look into why the indicator has not been progressing and what other Project Prevent activities may be captured by a new indicator.



SUMMARY OF QUARTERLY PROGRESS

EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT OR PENDING DELETION (CONTINUED)

- One of TPCP's long-term indicators, related to comprehensive smoke-free/tobacco-free policies is up for deletion at the April ATSC meeting. As discussed in previous reports, this indicator has not been useful in meeting the long-term objective. A virtual meeting was held in January with representatives of TPCP to examine options and it was determined that the best outcome would be to request the deletion of the indicator at the April 1 ATSC meeting.

Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program

- Two TS-MEP indicators were reported as in need of improvement. The Pregnant Women Expansion population saw a slight decrease of eight women being served, while the Hospital Benefit Coverage population saw a more significant decrease of 209 adults being served compared to the previous quarter. Both of these indicators, though experiencing some declines, are relatively stable. The TS-MEP evaluator reports that these decreases may reflect the new health environment after the lifting of the public health emergency in years prior.

UAMS Centers on Aging

- One indicator under the UAMS-COA, related to senior health clinic (SHC) encounters, was reported as in need of improvement. There were no recorded nursing home, inpatient, or home visits during this period. Due to external factors that have limited availability of specialized geriatric care in the state, the UAMS-COA is only meeting the stated goal in Northeast Arkansas. The UAMS-COA is technically "maximizing" SHC encounters, but this is only due to the diminished capacity of such encounters. Despite its best efforts, the agency is no longer capable of sustaining the legacy model of SHC services throughout most of the state. It is time to revisit this particular objective and consider modifying the UAMS-COA approach to cultivating opportunities for specialized senior healthcare.

UAMS East Regional Campus

- One indicator for UAMS East, pertaining to creation of a Rural Residency Training Track, was reported as in need of improvement. UAMS East Family Medical Center is slowly trying to build the foundation for the Rural Residency Training Track. The FMC must increase patient volume before applying. Patient volume has increased slightly, but is not at the level to begin a program. The status of the local hospital has changed since last quarter. The local Community Foundation is managing the hospital and all departments are closed except the emergency room, lab, and x-ray.

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THANK YOU

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