

matters

Volume 6, Number 1

SPRING 2010

Arkansas SAVES: Telemedicine Offers New Hope for Rural Stroke Victims



Bill McCourtney, M.D. '00, consults with UAMS' Salah Keyrouz, M.D., (on screen) to provide advanced care for stroke victims at Mena Regional Health System through the Arkansas SAVES program.

One of the most difficult tasks for **Bill McCourtney, M.D. '00**, is telling stroke victims when there's not much that can be done for them – that only time will tell if their lives will ever return to something approaching normal.

But since late 2008, Arkansas SAVES, a UAMS-led telemedicine program, has allowed physicians such as Dr. McCourtney, the emergency room director at Mena Regional Health System, to give many stroke victims in rural Arkansas greater hope.

“When you're able to tell someone that they're not going to be wheel chair-bound, they're not going to need a feeding tube for the rest of their life, and that they'll have the potential to walk again and do the things they've always done – that's a huge difference,” Dr. McCourtney said.

What can vastly improve the odds for certain ischemic stroke victims is the powerful clot-busting drug t-PA. However, the drug seldom has been used outside of major medical centers since its FDA approval in 1996. It is approved for use only in the first three hours after the onset of stroke symptoms. There is a risk of hemorrhage. And most community hospitals have no access or only part-time access to a neurologist, let alone a vascular neurologist to assist in evaluation and oversee the administration of t-PA.

“This is where telemedicine comes in,” said Salah Keyrouz, M.D., an assistant professor and chief of the Division of Neurocritical Care and Stroke in the College of Medicine's Department of Neurology and medical director of Arkansas SAVES (Stroke Assistance Through Virtual Emergency Support).

Mena Regional was one of the first three community hospitals to join SAVES. Today, the program links 15 hospitals with stroke neurologists. Funded by a state Department of Human Services Medicaid grant, the program will add three more sites this summer and nine next year, making it the largest of the 12 telestroke programs in the nation.

SAVES' main hub is UAMS' Center for Distance Health, which operates a 24/7 call center. When a distant emergency room has a patient with symptoms of ischemic stroke, the center links the site with Dr. Keyrouz or one of the only two other stroke neurologists in Arkansas (Margaret Tremwel, M.D., at Sparks Health System in Fort Smith and Vladimir Karpitskiy, M.D., in Hot Springs) via high-definition, high-speed live audio and video connections.

“Telemedicine offers a solution to the shortage of neurologists and stroke subspecialists in a rural state such as Arkansas,” Dr. Keyrouz said.

Dr. McCourtney agrees. “With SAVES, we can offer rural stroke patients the same high level of care that is available in the country's major urban centers. We've seen very good outcomes in our patients who received t-PA. It has given them their lives back.”

READ MORE: Dr. Keyrouz briefed members of the Founders Society on SAVES at the organization's annual dinner in February. The Founders Society allocated this year's proceeds to support UAMS' recently launched neurosciences initiative. *See page 3.*

A Note from the Dean, Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

UAMS has long prided itself on the expertise that its faculty physicians provide for the state of Arkansas. But we know that no matter how cutting-edge our clinical programs are, it's not enough. In the past few years we have been working harder to build a true culture of *service*.

That means working to become more patient-centered, of course. But we also know that patients aren't our only clinical "customers." You are. In this publication last spring we told you about some of our major efforts focusing on services for referring physicians. Our Physician Call Center had been up and running since October 2008. And our Referring Physician Advisory Board had met for the first time.

The board met again recently, providing us with valuable input on our initiatives so far. I want to thank this panel of about two dozen dedicated Arkansas physicians, most of whom are our alumni, for their ongoing partnership. We were very encouraged to hear that the Physician Call Center is successfully streamlining consults and transfers from other hospitals. We are continuing to tweak our procedures to improve transfers from other emergency departments.



In listening to our referring physicians, one thing remains clear above all else. You need (and certainly deserve) timely, consistent communication and feedback from our physicians – *every time*. We have made some progress in this area, including the launch last fall of an electronic records faxing system. As of this writing, some 22,000 fax records have gone out to referring physicians through this new tool. But we are developing plans to ensure that you consistently receive follow-up communication.

Earning your business isn't our only motivation for striving to better serve our referring physicians. A stronger, more professional clinical enterprise directly enhances our educational and training programs. And, ultimately, strengthening our partnerships with you means better medical care for Arkansans.

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

A Note from the Director, Judith McClain



When you have to do some heavy lifting, a little leverage goes a long way. That is particularly true when it comes to giving to the College of Medicine. Your contributions have provided much-needed leverage for big initiatives – and the return is always so much greater than the initial investment.

I am amazed at the power of your gifts, large and small. Our thanks to all of you who contributed during the Phonathon last month and in the weeks that followed. Your generosity is helping us to increase the number of substantial scholarships that we can offer, which helps to attract the best and brightest students and to reduce the burden of debt that our students face. (*Read more and check out the photos on page 6.*)

Meanwhile, our Dean's Society is stronger than ever after its third year, with over 100 members. (*See list on the next page.*) Despite these still-shaky economic times, so many of you stepped forward to give for the first time, and many others renewed their memberships. As many of you know, Dean's Society members make annual, unrestricted gifts of at least \$1,000 (\$1,500 for couples; \$500 for recent graduates).

The Dean's Society is a wonderful example of the leverage that helps us do great things. Total giving to date is about \$300,000, but the return is virtually incalculable. The first year's contributions helped to fund renovations in the UAMS library that enable our students to have 24-hour access. After-hours visits continue to rise, with more than 9,000 logged since last July alone.

In the second year, Dean Fiser used the funds to help develop a Division of Biomedical Informatics. The initiative has been credited as a key factor in UAMS receiving a prestigious \$19.9 million Clinical and Translational Science Award from the National Institutes of Health last year. And the 2009 funds are helping to launch a patient-centered medical home to provide enhanced team-based care in the Family Medical Center, where students and residents will experience this model of delivering high-quality care.

Your generosity is more important than ever. Thank you so much for being our leverage.

Judith

Founders Society Supports Neurosciences Initiative



UAMS Chancellor Dan Rahn, M.D., (fourth from left) visits with Founders Society members Mary Ann Stallings of Jonesboro and John Pauly, Ph.D., Dola Thompson Pauly, M.D. '49, Pat Kyser and Nikki Lawson, all of Little Rock.

Founders Society members approved a nearly \$50,000 contribution to support the College of Medicine's comprehensive neurosciences initiative during the society's annual dinner and meeting February 20.

"Our vision is to build a truly outstanding, multidisciplinary clinical neurosciences program at UAMS," said Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D. The initiative will be led by the newly appointed chairs of the departments of Neurosurgery and Neurology, who will work closely to recruit additional neurosurgeons and neurologists and collaborate with related clinical programs, UAMS Medical Center and neuroscience research programs.

and skull base, began serving as chair of the Department of Neurosurgery April 1. L. John Greenfield, M.D., Ph.D., a leading expert in the cellular mechanisms of epilepsy and the actions of anti-epileptic drugs, will join the faculty as chair of the Department of Neurology July 1.

J.D. Day, M.D., an internationally known leader in skull base surgery who also specializes in Gamma Knife surgery and vascular disorders of the brain

The guest speaker for the dinner was Salah Keyrouz, M.D., chief of the Division of Neurocritical Care and Stroke, who provided an overview of the Arkansas SAVES program. *(See cover story.)*

Dean's Society

The Dean's Society has supported diverse programs for the College of Medicine since its founding in late 2006. Members have pledged to make unrestricted gifts to the College of Medicine.

Individuals (\$1,000)

Robert W. Arrington, M.D.
Mrs. Bonnie Axelson
Michael E. Barnett, M.D.
Hannah Beene-Lowder, M.D.
Dr. James R. Braun
John C. Byrd, M.D.
Stephen E. Carter, M.D.
Richard B. Clark, M.D.
Steven Collier, M.D.
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Joanne Donker, M.D.
Gene L. France, M.D.
Deborah K. Fulbright, M.D.
Michael G. Futrell, M.D.

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Terry G. Green, M.D.
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The Rev. Dr. Joanna J. Seibert and Dr. Robert W. Seibert
Drs. Vern and Mack Shotts
Drs. Phyllis and Warren Skaug
Dr. and Mrs. David M. Yocum

Thank You

YOU ANSWERED THE CALL! Read about the 2010 Phonathon on page 6.

Why I Became a Doctor ...

A hunting accident on a wintry Thanksgiving morning when he was 17 cost **Chuck Hitt, M.D. '89**, one of his fingers – but it sealed his desire to become a physician.

It happened so quickly. The too-big, borrowed gun that he was using that day had been dragging in the snow, and without thinking, the high school senior who grew up around Pine Bluff and England, Ark., tried to clear the barrel.

“During my surgeries at UAMS they used a regional anesthetic, so I was awake and heard everything that was going on,” said Dr. Hitt. “I was amazed at all of the tools and how they could be used to repair a person’s anatomy. I just thought surgery was the coolest thing, and I decided that I had to do that.”

Today Dr. Hitt is a specialist in robotic and minimally invasive surgery, director of the General Obstetrics and Gynecology Division in the College of Medicine and practice director of the University Women’s Health Center. He returned to UAMS, where he had trained as well as received his medical degree, in 2007 after 14 years in private practice in Hot Springs.

Dr. Hitt’s lifelong interest in technology helped fuel his interest and involvement in UAMS’ award-winning telemedicine program, the Antenatal and Neonatal Guidelines, Education and Learning System (ANGELS), while he was still in private practice.

Telemedicine is now a major focus of his work at UAMS. In January he received a \$735,000 federal grant for Arkansas START (System to Access Rural Telcolposcopy), a telemedicine-based program that makes colposcopies available to low-income women at health clinics in Clarksville, Hope and Wynne.

Colposcopies are used to help determine if an abnormal pap smear is cervical cancer.

So did medicine turn out to be as exciting as Dr. Hitt imagined when he was 17? “Absolutely,” he said. “Of course there are mundane aspects, but I am continuously fascinated by it. It seems like around every corner there’s a new discovery, a new way of doing medicine, a new way of sharing ideas.”

*Do you have an interesting story about why you became a physician? We’re looking for stories to share on the alumni website (www.uams.edu/com/alumni) or in future issues of *Alumni Matters*. Click on the “Class Notes” link on the Alumni page and then “Mail Bag.”*



Nominations, Please ...

Who do you think should receive the 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award? The annual honor recognizes an alumnus or alumna who has made outstanding contributions to the health of all people through patient care, research and/or health services administration and who exemplifies the principles of the medical profession.

Nominations will be accepted through June 15. Please visit www.uams.edu/com/alumni for more information and a nomination form, or call Ginny Rice at 501-686-6684. A comprehensive letter of nomination and CV also are required, and 2-3 additional letters of support are desirable.

Share Your News!

We want to know what you’ve been doing – and your classmates do too. We’re always looking for alumni news and features for the Class Notes section in *Alumni Matters* and for the online version of Class Notes. Here’s how to reach us:

ONLINE: Update your information and post your news at www.uams.edu/com/alumni/mailbag.asp.

E-MAIL: riceginny@uams.edu

POSTAL MAIL:
UAMS Medical Alumni Association
4301 W Markham ST, #642
Little Rock, AR 72205

Looking for a classmate?
Class Rosters are available online:
www.uams.edu/com/alumni

Four Alumni Honored with Endowed Chairs

Congratulations to four of our alumni who received endowed chairs at UAMS or Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) since our Fall 2009 issue!



Colleagues praised the leadership of **John Cone, M.D. '77**, in the development of Arkansas' Trauma System at his October 21, 2009, investiture as the Norma and Nolie Mumey, M.D., Chair in Surgery at UAMS. Dr. Cone is chief of the Division of General Surgery, director of the UAMS Trauma Service and medical director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit.



Robert Arrington, M.D. '68, has been a driving force in shaping neonatal care in Arkansas during more than 30 years of service as chief of the Neonatology Section in the College of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics. He became the inaugural holder of the Walmart Endowed Chair in Neonatology at ACH on November 3, 2009.



Daniel Knight, M.D. '85, chairman of the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, was invested as the third Dr. Algernon Sidney Garnett Chair in Family Medicine on January 20, 2010. Dr. Knight was a leader in resident training and education in the department for 10 years before assuming the department chairmanship last year.



Stephen Schexnayder, M.D. '87, was honored for his outstanding work with some of Arkansas' sickest children during his investiture as the Morris and Hattie Oakley Endowed Chair in Pediatric Critical Care Medicine at ACH on January 6, 2010. Dr. Schexnayder is chief of the Critical Care Medicine Section and medical director of the Donald W. Reynolds Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at ACH.



College of Medicine Dean **Debra H. Fiser, M.D. '77**, was named Citizen of the Year by the Arkansas Chapter of the March of Dimes in November. March of Dimes officials cited her lifetime of work and leadership in pediatric care and medical education, including her role in founding UAMS' Pediatric Critical Care Medicine Section and the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at ACH, and her current role as Dean in enhancing medical care and the health of Arkansans.



Douglas Curran, M.D. '76, received the 2009 Presidential Award of Merit from the Texas Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Curran, who has practiced in Athens, Texas, for more than 25 years, was honored as an advocate of the family medicine specialty and for his dedication to his patients.



Robert Fincher, M.D. '65, received the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Auxiliary's Distinguished Honoree Award in April in conjunction with the annual Cooks Tour fundraiser. Dr. Fincher, director of breast imaging and medical director of the UAMS Breast Center, pioneered virtually every breast imaging procedure in Arkansas. He has interpreted more than 150,000 mammograms, performed more than 15,000 breast ultrasounds, 8,000 needle localizations and 5,000 core biopsies so far in his career.



Stephen J. Clark, M.D., '79, has joined Community Hospice of Northeast Florida as chief medical officer, after more than 25 years as a family physician and practice owner in Jacksonville.



The College of Medicine 2009 Distinguished Alumnus, **D. Brent Polk, M.D., '84**, has been named chairman of pediatrics and vice dean for academic affairs at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. He also serves as physician-in-chief and vice-president of CHLA and as director of the Saban Research Institute. (Watch your mail soon for the new issue of *UA Medicine*, which includes a feature on Dr. Polk!)



John McGowan, M.D. '80, has been named president and chief executive officer of the RMH Medical Group in Harrisonburg, Va. The multi-specialty practice with approximately 60 physicians is a subsidiary of RMH Healthcare and is affiliated with Rockingham Memorial Hospital.

Phonathon 2010

After the lighthearted moment captured in this group photo, freshmen volunteers for Phonathon 2010 got down to serious business to raise money for scholarships. The Class of 2013 generated \$25,000 in pledges on the first night alone. The Phonathon continued on two other nights in March, and your generous contributions have been pouring in ever since.

Aaron Kelkhoff rallied his classmates, solicited prizes from businesses and worked to make the Phonathon a great success. Kelkhoff was impressed with the kindness of the alumni he called. "Even if they were unable to contribute financially, most of them wished me well in my studies," he said. "Some even told me to feel free to contact them if I ever had questions about their particular specialty."



Why I Gave ...



"I am proud of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. There are a lot of deserving students out

there who want to attend medical school. Through my gifts, I maintain my connection with the university as well as the state."

- **Linda Nall, M.D. '73**,
Shreveport, La.



"I don't know how anybody can afford to go to medical school anymore!"

- **Stephan Pinkerton**,
house staff '86,
Arkadelphia



Day with a Doctor

Sixty of you, including **Moses Kelley, M.D. '92**, volunteered for Day with a Doctor this spring. Dr. Kelley mentored freshman **Aaron Strobel**. "I really enjoyed the opportunity to shadow Dr. Kelley," Aaron said. "I learned a lot about his specialty, cardiology, and also had a lot of fun." The Alumni Association has sponsored the very popular program since 1988.

Match Day 2010

Seniors **Jared and Blair Beavers** (pictured) were ecstatic to learn on March 18 that they both matched to a pediatric residency at UAMS and Arkansas Children's Hospital. The couple are among the 45 percent of the class who will enter residencies in primary care. All 142 of this year's participating seniors have secured positions, even though the match has become more competitive than ever with the numbers of applicants vastly outpacing the growth in positions. Our graduates are headed for a record 31 states, and many landed residencies at some of the most prestigious institutions in the country.



10th Block

The 10th Block course caps medical school for UAMS seniors, providing these soon-to-be alumni with information about the business of medical practice and other final topics before graduation. To commemorate the occasion, the Medical Alumni Association gave the class of 2010 notepad portfolios. Pictured: senior **Sarabeth Bailey** with Judith McClain and Ginny Rice.





Some of the most fun we have all year is visiting with you at receptions hosted and sponsored by alumni in their homes around Arkansas. These lively, convivial gatherings are a great opportunity for alumni to visit with Dean Fiser and to reconnect with classmates and graduates from across the generations.

We traveled to Conway last September for a reception at the home of Zanette and **Keith Bell, M.D. '82**. In addition to the Bells, this lovely evening was sponsored by **Shelley and Brian Russell (M.D. '96; M.D. '99)**, Jan and **Phil Stone, M.D. '77**, and Jennifer and **Martin Moix, M.D. '96**.

Later that month, Brenda and **Tim Killough, M.D. '87**, welcomed alumni and guests into their home in Searcy. Co-sponsors of the reception were Mark and **Cheryl Payne, M.D. '91**, and Terrye and **Clark Fincher, M.D. '77**.

As this issue of Alumni Matters was going to press, we were looking forward to an evening with Hot Springs-area alumni at the beautiful lakeside home of **Jan and Chuck Wright, (M.D. '81; M.D. '78)**. Other sponsors for the April 15 event were Kim and **Kevin Hale, M.D. '87**, **Don Howard, M.D. '60**, and Serethia Crawford, and Stella and **Robert McCrary, M.D. '75**.

We're grateful to all of our reception hosts and sponsors for their generosity and wonderful hospitality. And we hope all of you will join us when we have a chance to come to your town.



COMING SOON:

Staying connected with our history enriches our lives. Watch for information soon about the nearly completed College of Medicine History Web page.

In Memoriam

1940s

Charles R. Beeson, M.D. '44, of Carlsbad, N.M., died January 25, 2010.

John Munn Fulmer, M.D. '45, of Little Rock, died February 25, 2010.

1950s

Chaney Wes Taylor, M.D. '50, of Batesville, died January 7, 2010.

Dolph T. Wells, M.D. '51, of San Antonio, died on September 28, 2009.

Duane E. Brothers, M.D. '51, of Tulsa, died March 23, 2010.

Herbert Bruce Daniels Jr., M.D. '52, of Cleburne, Texas, died October 19, 2009.

James E. Murphy Jr., M.D. '52, of Hot Springs, died November 5, 2009.

William E. Carson, M.D. '53, of San Diego, died January 6, 2010.

Charles Dwight Dodson, M.D. '55, of Fayetteville, died January 18, 2010.

Edward E. Estes, M.D. '57, of Gainesville, Ga., died December 20, 2009.

Howard A. Kurzner, M.D. '57, of Pinecrest, Fla., died March 26, 2010.

Jerry M. Young Jr., M.D. '59, of North Little Rock, died October 30, 2009.

John Douglas Clower Sr., M.D. '59, of Rogers, died March 30, 2010.

1960s

Charles E. Hicks, M.D. '60, of Hamburg, died February 14, 2010.

Weems Roland McArthur, M.D. '63, of Panama City, Fla., died December 29, 2009.

Benjamin Rodger Lowery, M.D. '67, of Judsonia, died October 26, 2009.

1970s

Douglas Melvin Rogers, M.D. '76, of Nampa, Idaho, died October 27, 2009.

Glenn Harris Bennett, M.D. '77, of Lafayette, La., died February 26, 2010.

J. Michael Young, M.D. '78, of Lititz, Pa., died January 22, 2010.

1990s

C. Bryant Turbeville, M.D. '93, of Little Rock, died April 4, 2010.

ALUMNI WEEKEND

August 27-28, 2010

- Reception at Heifer International Village (Friday evening)
- UAMS tour and luncheon (Saturday)
- Golden Grad Reception (Saturday)
- Class dinners at selected venues (Saturday evening)

Does your class end in "0" or "5"? Watch your mail!



Pack Your Bags!

Watch for whales on a cruise to America's "last frontier," venture on the northern seas, or explore the exotic ports of the Mediterranean on one of three voyages planned for you and your classmates this fall.

Scandinavia & Russian Splendors

(Sweden, Estonia, Russia, Denmark and more)

August 18-September 2

Embrace Alaska

(Hubbard Glacier, Ketchikan, Skagway, Juneau, Sitka)

September 8-15

Mediterranean Inspiration

(Italy, Monaco, Greece, Montenegro, Croatia)

October 17-30



For information, visit www.uams.edu/com/alumni.

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Just send an e-mail request to riceginny@uams.edu and ask that your name be added to our e-mail broadcast list.

Alumni Matters is a biannual publication of the UAMS Medical Alumni Association and the College of Medicine Office of the Dean.

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