The College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has achieved nearly 130 years of phenomenal growth and success in teaching, clinical care, research and service since our founding in 1879. As Arkansas’ only medical school, we train the majority of the state’s physicians. We strive to help them acquire not only the ultimate in medical skills, but also the professional and ethical standards that will ensure the very best care for patients. Our world-class clinicians and researchers serve on the forefront of medical advances. Our faculty are on staff at UAMS Medical Center, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, the UAMS Area Health Education Centers and numerous other clinics and facilities providing services throughout the state of Arkansas and for patients from around the world.
**Cover story:**

UAMS & the COM get ready to produce more physicians for Arkansas

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Forward Thinking

The College of Medicine’s class of 2012 has been on campus for a few months now – 160 bright, eager students starting on the path toward becoming physicians. It’s an exciting and challenging time for them, but no less challenging than the years after they graduate. Most of these future physicians will care for a population that is aging and has greater health care demands.

We’re working to make sure they are well prepared for the challenge – and that there will be enough physicians in the years ahead to provide all Arkansans with access to high-quality health care.

The aging of America’s 79 million baby boomers – including 340,000 baby boomer physicians headed for retirement – threatens to cause severe shortages of doctors as well as other health care professionals. At the urging of the Association of American Medical Colleges and other groups, medical schools nationwide are expanding enrollment.

In this issue of University of Arkansas Medicine you’ll read about the steps we’re taking to accommodate more students. You’ll learn about the satellite campus being developed in Northwest Arkansas and about on-campus preparations such as the new education building that opened this fall. You’ll also meet Peter O. Kohler, M.D., the former College of Medicine interim dean who is leading the effort in Northwest Arkansas.

Our mission as Arkansas’ only medical school has never been more important. Forward thinking, and the steps we take today, will make a great difference in the health of Arkansans for decades to come.

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.
Dean, College of Medicine
Vice Chancellor, UAMS
For many rural Arkansans, it’s already difficult finding a physician. And national experts warn that access to physicians and other health care professionals could be far more limited in the decades ahead.

To stem the anticipated shortage of doctors, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and other groups have urged medical schools to increase enrollment 30 percent by 2015.

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Medicine (COM) is working to ensure that Arkansas has sufficient numbers of highly trained physicians. A key step is to get more medical students into the pipeline, and the COM is planning to gradually expand the entering medical class from the current 160 students to 200.

But it’s not as simple as opening the doors wider. A satellite campus is being planned in booming Northwest Arkansas to provide essential clinical training sites, preceptors and patients for third- and fourth-year medical students and residents. The Fayetteville location also will house satellite pharmacy, graduate nursing and allied health education programs. On the main campus in Little Rock, a new education building opened this fall to provide much-needed classroom and auditorium space. Other upgrades are on the drawing board, including an expansion of the Gross Anatomy Laboratory, which helps teach every COM freshman the foundations of medicine.

“Our citizens are counting on us,” said COM Dean and UAMS Vice Chancellor Debra H. Fiser, M.D. “As Arkansas’ only medical school, we feel a sense of obligation to increase our enrollment and produce the greater number of doctors Arkansans will need in the future. It takes many years to educate and train a new physician. The time to act is now.”

The looming physician shortage largely comes down to numbers. The so-called “baby boomers” – Americans born between 1946 and 1964 – have started turning 60. By 2030, the U.S. Census Bureau predicts, there will be 72 million Americans 65 or older, twice as many as in 2000. Arkansas is graying too. With almost 14 percent of citizens over the age of 65, it ranks 10th in the nation. By 2030, one in five Arkansans will be at least 65 years old.

“Our aging citizens will require more health care, and unfortunately Arkansas has poor health statistics to begin with,” said Fiser. Arkansas ranks in the top 10 among all states in deaths from conditions such as heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Meanwhile, some 340,000 baby boomer physicians will begin retiring in just a couple of years. Experts predict that without substantial medical school enrollment increases, the nation will face an 85,000 to 200,000 physician shortfall by 2020.

But Arkansas is behind the curve already. With about one doctor for every 500 citizens, Arkansas ranks near the bottom among all states and the District of Columbia in physicians per capita. All or portions of nearly two thirds of Arkansas counties are federally designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA).

The good news is that as Arkansas educates and trains more physicians, a great many of them will remain in state to practice. Close to half of the state’s active physicians were educated or trained at UAMS, and Arkansas ranks third in the nation in the percentage of active physicians who graduated from medical school in the state.

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Satellite campus will accommodate more students—and inspire careers in primary care

This time next year, a small group of College of Medicine (COM) juniors could be immersed in clinical training and classes some 190 miles from UAMS’ Little Rock campus. If all goes well, they’ll be the first medical students at a UAMS satellite campus.

UAMS-Northwest will work with physicians and area hospitals to provide the essential clinical sites and patients that the COM needs in order to educate and train larger classes and more residents.

Renovations are beginning this fall on the old Washington Regional Hospital in Fayetteville to convert it into a campus that will help UAMS address shortfalls of health care professionals. At full enrollment, the campus will have more than 300 students needed with block scheduling.

Promoting Primary Care

Medical students at UAMS-Northwest won’t just be in a new location. They’ll be the first in Arkansas to experience clinical clerkships in a new way.

“We want to make sure all Arkansans have access to care, and that means producing graduates who want to work as first-contact, primary care physicians,” said Richard P. Wheeler, M.D., the COM’s executive associate dean for academic affairs.

Juniors at the satellite will complete the same clerkships as their classmates in Little Rock, but they won’t rotate through traditional multi-week blocks devoted to individual disciplines. Instead, students will experience all of the facets of medicine on an ongoing basis. Following a “longitudinal” curriculum, they might work in a family medicine clinic one day, with a psychiatrist the next, and with a surgeon another day of the week, Wheeler said.

“The experience will be a little more like they would have as primary care physicians, whose patients and cases are different each day,” added Kohler. “We think it will appeal to a lot of students.”

Longitudinal curricula are being advocated by a national consortium of schools. The curriculum is a good fit for UAMS-Northwest, where most of the faculty serving as preceptors will be physicians in area clinics and hospitals. Participating physicians won’t necessarily have to devote the multiple consecutive weeks of time that would be needed with block scheduling.
Finding Faculty

Recruiting faculty is one of many logistical steps for Kohler and his staff. The need for preceptors will grow as the number of medical students and residents increases. “Physicians in private practice have much to offer as educators,” Kohler said. “They provide students with practical experience, and at the same time they usually feel that the students bring something very positive to the clinic.”

Rogers pediatrician Marti Sharkey, M.D., is thrilled at the opportunity. The Fayetteville native was born in the old Washington Regional Hospital. While in residency at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, she trained to teach others. “I am very excited about the opportunity. The Fayetteville native was born in the old Washington Regional Hospital. While in residency at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, she trained to teach others. “I am very excited about the opportunity. I think the students bring something very positive to the clinic.”

The feeling is similar for Fayetteville ophthalmologist Morriss Henry, M.D., who has welcomed many visiting UAMS students and residents into his clinic. “It’s nice to pass along the knowledge that someone gave you, along with your own experiences,” he said. “As a preceptor you really have to stay abreast because students ask a lot of questions. It keeps you fresh.”

Henry has become an ambassador for the satellite as chairman of the UAMS-Northwest Advisory Board, a panel of 16 health care, business and education leaders in the region. “I really see this campus as a golden opportunity to improve health care throughout Arkansas,” he said. “I want to make sure people understand the importance of this.”

A long and successful career in academic medicine took Peter O. Kohler, M.D., from one coast to the other, but grandchildren and fond memories brought him back to Arkansas when he retired.

But “retirement” isn’t all rest and relaxation for Kohler. The former department chairman and interim dean of the College of Medicine is leading UAMS’ effort to open a satellite campus in Northwest Arkansas.

“I would not be good just hanging around the house, or as my wife says, hanging on the refrigerator door,” said Kohler, who was appointed vice chancellor for the Northwest Arkansas Region by Arkansas voters. It was named in honor of retiring UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson in April 2007.

“It is vital for Arkansas to get more future physicians and health care professionals into the pipeline,” Kohler said. “So for me, this is an exciting opportunity to do something worthwhile.”

“Dr. Kohler brings a passion for academic medicine and an exemplary record of success to our effort,” said Wilson. “This is a complex and extremely important project, and he is the very best person to have at the helm.”

Kohler graduated from Duke University School of Medicine in 1963 and worked as a researcher for several years at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md. From there it was on to the Baylor College of Medicine, where he was chief of the Endocrinology Division from 1973 to 1977, when he was recruited to UAMS. He was chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine for nine years and served as interim dean in 1985-1986.

Kohler left Arkansas to become dean of the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. In 1988 he was recruited to the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in Portland, where he oversaw tremendous growth during 18 years as president. At his retirement, he was one of the longest serving presidents at a U.S. academic medical center.

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Stopping the Hurt

UAMS’ Sunny Anand has made medical care for premature babies less painful

Kanwuljeet S. “Sunny” Anand, M.B.B.S., D. Phil., is happiest when he’s in the pediatric intensive care unit, caring for Arkansas’ infants and children. But he also finds fulfillment in the laboratory, where for the past 25 years he has changed how physicians worldwide view and manage pain in babies.

“My favorite place is at the bedside, taking care of children and talking to families,” said Anand, a professor of pediatrics, anesthesiology, pharmacology and neurobiology in the UAMS College of Medicine and director of the Pain Neurobiology Laboratory at Arkansas Children’s Hospital Research Institute (ACHRI). “Clinical care and interacting with families motivates me to go back to the lab and try harder.”

Anand’s determination was sparked by a crucial observation when he was a pediatric resident and research fellow in England in 1982.

He was in Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship after completing medical school and training in India. Working in a neonatal intensive care unit, he often saw his patients leave for surgery in relatively good shape, only to return highly unstable. “They would come back looking gray and in shock,” he recalled.

Anand learned that babies were not receiving anesthesia for major operations. It was standard practice at the time, because physicians believed that neonates’ nervous systems weren’t developed enough to feel pain, and that anesthesia could harm them.

Anand convinced his doctoral supervisor to let him study the effects of pain and anesthesia by measuring hormonal and metabolic changes during and after surgery. “We found that babies had hormonal stress responses three to five times greater than that of adults,” he said. “But when we gave babies anesthesia, their stress responses came down, metabolic changes normalized and they had fewer complications. This was completely uncharted territory at the time.”

Anand continued his studies during a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University and Boston Children’s Hospital. His discovery that higher doses of anesthesia significantly reduced mortality was published as a lead article in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1992. Other studies explored “what this means” – how stress responses and other indicators reflected that babies may actually feel pain.

“It was almost like a silent revolution started from Boston,” said Anand. Within a few years, hundreds of studies were being done on pain in neonates and children, and in various diseases and procedures. “For the first time, people realized that if you have a kinder, gentler approach to babies, it will improve their outcomes,” he said.

Anand’s research has continued on many fronts. One of his earliest projects at UAMS was to lead a multi-center, federally-funded study of the effects of morphine used for pain relief in premature babies. Anand and colleagues reported in The Lancet in 2004 that routine doses of morphine did not prevent the brain injuries leading to cerebral palsy in premature infants. The National Institutes of Health recently approved funding for a follow-up study of the long-term cognitive, behavioral and physical effects of morphine in babies from the original study. The lab also is exploring safer pain medications including non-pharmacological methods such as acupuncture.

By then, Anand had come to a personal crossroads. Despite his training in India and England and growing prominence in pain research, becoming a licensed physician in the United States required starting over as an intern. “I could not imagine myself not being a physician,” said Anand. He completed an internship and residency in pediatrics at Boston Children’s Hospital and fellowship training in neonatal and pediatric intensive care at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Anand joined the faculty of Emory University in Atlanta in 1993 and began studying the long-term effects of repetitive pain in neonates. Through animal studies he learned that repeated needle sticks during the first week of life led to altered pain processing, higher anxiety, greater preference for alcohol and altered social discrimination in adulthood.

In 1997, then Pediatrics Chair Debra H. Fiser, now the College of Medicine dean, recruited Anand to UAMS. He developed an active laboratory at ACHRI and served as chief of Critical Care Medicine until 2003. Since 2001 he has held the Morris & Hettie Oakley Endowed Chair in Pediatric Critical Care Medicine.

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Among many national roles, Anand served as chairman of the Neonatal Pain Task Force for the Newborn Drug Development Initiative coordinated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in 2003-2006. He currently is a member of the FDA’s Anesthesia and Life Support Drugs Advisory Committee and the American Board of Pediatrics.

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Anand has earned accolades in Arkansas and around the globe. In April he will travel to Uppsala, Sweden, to receive one of the most prestigious awards in pediatrics, the Nils Rosén von Rosenstein Medal. The award, presented to three physicians every five years by the Swedish Pediatric Society, is named after the 18th century physician considered to be the founder of modern pediatrics.

Four prominent U.S. physicians have received the medal since its inception in 1964, including C. Henry Kempe, a pioneer in the prevention and treatment of smallpox and early leader in the detection and prevention of child abuse.
As the “king of double entendres,” James Pasley, Ph.D., sees his students as gluttons for punishment. He has taught physiology to College of Medicine freshmen for 38 years, blending his infectious personality with comedy. It might just be the humor injected into every lecture or his legendary portrayal of a contracting colon that allows students to retain tough material.

“That’s just me!” Pasley said. “I enjoy humor and getting a little ping in. I use a lot of puns, which I know is the lowest form of humor, but they are so bad that the students have to remember the material!”

A nationally recognized medical educator, Pasley is a professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics and associate dean for educational advancement. He has received the Chancellor’s Faculty Teaching Award, the Master Teacher Award and numerous Red Sash Awards. He also held the Lutterloh Medical Education Excellence Professorship. He sees his role as helping students focus on their own goal of doing well in medical school so that they can have a great, successful career not only helping patients but their communities as well.

“In addition to his memorable lectures, I’ve had wonderful personal experiences talking to him and just shooting the breeze,” said James Pruitt, a third-year medical student. “He’s always been supportive of what I do.”

Pasley has helped implement numerous student preparation programs that all emphasize the critical thinking skills needed to succeed in medical school. He teaches the thirteen-week MCAT prep course for college juniors and seniors, and directs a Step 1 and Step 2 exam review for current medical students. Students work on questions in small groups to build their test taking skills through the courses.

“The amount of information that medical students are exposed to, which grows every year, is like trying to drink out of a fire hose,” he said. “It’s just so much. What we tell students is it’s not just how much you know, it’s how well you use your knowledge. We emphasize that students must learn to problem solve and to apply their information to a different situation they’ve never heard of.”

In 1993, Pasley noticed that many students had difficulty adjusting to the first semester of medical school. “Instead of letting the students spend their time trying to crawl out of that hole and get back with the rest of the class or not make it at all, I felt that if we could start some kind of an early intervention plan, it would give them a jump start,” he said.

The Pre-Matriculation Program is indeed a head start—an academic and social acclimation to medical school. Students choosing to enroll in this voluntary program start the summer before their first year and begin some of their courses early, sample the entire curriculum, learn about future residency opportunities and meet a group of peers who will be with them for the next four years.

“It’s a jump start to medical school so they will hit the ground running from the beginning, and that’s what we want them to do,” Pasley said. “The students then have a built-in support group from the program, and I think that’s one of the great strengths. They can rely on each other all four years.” A record number of 44 students “graduated” from the 2008 program—more than a quarter of the freshman class.

After 16 years of the program, we think we are on the right track in helping these students acclimate to medical school,” Pasley said. “That’s what has been so satisfying to me, if I can be of some help. The students actually do the work, not me. But if we can help them in some way to be able to use the skills and knowledge they already have to do well, then I’m pleased. I’m happy to play some small role in that.”
If you ask the College of Medicine’s Stavros Manolagas, M.D., Ph.D., about his three decades of work in osteoporosis and bone metabolism research, sports aphorisms are likely to spring forth.

They frame discussion of how he recruited an international team of researchers to the UAMS Center for Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Diseases. “We had a good idea and a supportive school,” Manolagas said. “It was the concept of ‘build it and they will come.’ And like a baseball team, we’ve recruited ‘hitters’ and ‘pitchers’ whose strengths complement one another.”

The Division of Endocrinology director has a coach-like management philosophy. “I’m a strong believer that if you push for excellence, you’re going to get it,” he said. “But you have to be demanding and you have to motivate people. You have to raise the bar.”

Sports references even crop up in Manolagas’ publications, such as an editorial in the July issue of Endocrinology titled: “De-fense! De-fense! De-fense: Scavenging H2O2 While Making Cholesterol.”

But colleagues say the adages are a good fit. “Dr. Manolagas is very demanding,” said Internal Medicine Chairman James Marsh, M.D. “But his faculty respect that and they love him. He truly gets the very best out of his team.”

Manolagas is the Thomas A. Andreoli, M.D., M.A.C.P., Clinical Scholar Chair in Internal Medicine, named for the former department chairman who recruited him to UAMS 15 years ago. Manolagas also is a professor and vice chair for research in the department.

Born in Piraeus, Greece, Manolagas received his medical degree at the University of Athens in 1969. He completed his clinical training in Manchester, England, as well as a research fellowship that culminated in a doctoral degree in biochemistry and endocrinology. He immigrated to the United States in 1979 to join the faculty of the University of California at San Diego. He spent 10 years in California and then six years at Indiana University, becoming prominent in the field of osteoporosis and bone metabolism.

“What I saw was an individual who was driven to achieve in the best sense of the word,” said Andreoli, who is now a distinguished professor of medicine at UAMS. “Dr. Manolagas was already well known, which gave him a strong hand in recruiting, and he was a gifted investigator.”

In 1993 the division had only $50,000 in research funds and five faculty members. Today the division’s annual research budget is more than $5 million, and the faculty has grown to about 30.

The Center for Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Diseases, which Manolagas founded, pools the expertise of researchers from across campus. One of the largest osteoporosis research centers in the world, it has brought in some $50 million, including continuous program funding for over a decade from the National Institutes of Health.

The center has greatly expanded understanding of bone biology and the molecular and cellular mechanisms of osteoporosis. In 1999, with the help of UAMS BioVentures, Manolagas founded a startup company to develop treatments for bone loss. Anabonix, Inc. initially focused on estren, a synthetic compound that reversed bone loss in animal studies while avoiding the health risks of conventional hormone replacement therapies. Manolagas’ findings, published in Science, drew international news coverage. The company, now called Radius Health, Inc. and based in Cambridge, Mass., is developing a new generation of drug therapies for osteoporosis and other conditions. Manolagas serves on the scientific advisory board.

When Manolagas came to UAMS, he was allocated the eighth floor of what is now the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. To facilitate dialogue and collaboration, he had windows installed between labs and the corridor. “Our floor was designed to encourage synergy and interaction among the researchers,” he said. “Scientists must communicate. The middle of our floor has a library, and we view it as sort of a village square for ideas.”

In recent years, the team’s idea-sharing has contributed to a broader approach to osteoporosis research focusing on links to oxidative stress. “The same mechanisms seem to be responsible for many diseases of old age,” Manolagas said. “The mechanism that we found for osteoporosis seems to be very similar to mechanisms that other researchers have found for insulin resistance and diabetes, hyperlipidemia and atherosclerosis. We could actually be moving toward having not one drug for one disease, but one drug for many diseases. So that is very, very exciting.”

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“Team Manolagas: Endocrinologist has made UAMS a world leader in osteoporosis research”

Stavros Manolagas, M.D., Ph.D. (center) fosters friendly competition among colleagues – even holding an annual water volleyball game. Joining him in the pool are (from left) Bob Jilka, Ph.D., Charles O’Brien, Ph.D., Maria Schuller, Ph.D., and Carlos Galli, Ph.D., D.D.S.
UAMS and Partners to Provide Inpatient Mental Health Care in Northwest Arkansas

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Psychiatric Research Institute (PRI) and a coalition of community providers have partnered to establish a much-needed inpatient mental health unit in Northwest Arkansas.

The PRI will provide patient care and oversight of the 29-bed inpatient program slated to open in January at Northwest Medical Center-Springdale. PRI is also developing an outpatient clinic to serve pre- and post-admission needs of some patients, and the program will be used as a teaching site for UAMS psychiatry residency and fellowship programs.

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a number of inpatient psychiatry programs close throughout Arkansas. The Northwest Arkansas region has been without an inpatient mental health unit since early 2002.

In addition to UAMS and Northwest Health System, the coalition includes Ozark Guidance, the Care Foundation, Washington Regional Medical Center and Mercy Health Center, Northwest Arkansas. The project is being funded with more than $1 million in special funds from the governor's office and more than $1 million in appropriations from the Arkansas General Assembly in 2005 and 2007.

COM Announces New Informatics Division

The College of Medicine (COM) is developing a biomedical informatics program that will provide technology, computer systems and expertise to help researchers and clinicians manage the massive amount of data that is being generated and efficiently translate findings into better medicine.

As part of the initiative, the COM is establishing a Division of Informatics in the Department of Biostatistics and has begun a national search for a director. COM leaders are working to secure philanthropic and other funding for the initiative. Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D., has allocated this year’s proceeds from the annual giving campaign, to help launch the division.

“Many medical breakthroughs could be right under our noses,” said Lawrence Cornett, Ph.D., executive associate dean for research in the COM and vice chancellor for research at UAMS. “The challenge is to pull together vast amounts of very different types of genetic, pharmaceutical and other information, and our informatics initiative will help us to do that.”

New Cardiovascular Chief to Lead Expansion

David Rutlen, M.D., a nationally known leader in clinical cardiology, has been appointed professor and director of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine in the College of Medicine Department of Internal Medicine. Rutlen is leading efforts to expand and enhance cardiovascular programs at UAMS. He has particular interest and expertise in heart disease in women and ethnic minorities. Rutlen previously was a professor of medicine and vice chair for ambulatory programs at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He was chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine and director of the Froedtert & Medical College Cardiovascular Center from 1999 to 2007. He also has held academic appointments at Harvard Medical School, where he received his medical degree, Yale University School of Medicine and the Medical College of Georgia.

Arthritis Expert is New Director of Rheumatology

Robert A. Ortmann, M.D., has been appointed associate professor and director of the Division of Rheumatology in the College of Medicine Department of Internal Medicine. Ortmann was previously director of the Division of Immunology and Rheumatology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He trained at the National Institutes of Health, first as a research associate in the Laboratory of Immunology at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases from 1993 to 1998, and as a clinical associate in the Arthritis and Rheumatism Branch of the National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases from 1998 to 2000. Ortmann is leading efforts at UAMS to better understand how the immune system promotes certain forms of arthritis.

In Memoriam

Mark David Crew, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, died June 10, 2008. He was 46.

U.S.A.F. Maj. Charles Kevin Roberts, D.O., a radiology resident at UAMS, died June 8, 2008. He was 39.

Endowed Chairs

Christopher T. Westfall, M.D., was invested Oct. 8 as the first recipient of the Pat Walker Chair in Ophthalmology at UAMS. Westfall, who joined the JEF faculty in 1997, is a professor and vice chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology. He directs the ocularplastic and reconstructive service and sees patients at UAMS, Arkansas Children’s Hospital and the John L. McClean Veterans Hospital. The chair was funded with gifts from the Pat & Willard Walker Foundation, which has provided many contributions to UAMS over the years.

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Nalini S. Bora, Ph.D., was invested Oct. 8 as the inaugural recipient of the Bernice Young Jones Chair in Ophthalmology at UAMS. Bora has been a professor of ophthalmology and director of the Pat and Willard Walker Eye Research Center in the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute (JEI) since 2006. Also a professor of microbiology and immunology, Bora researches the biochemical, immunological and molecular mechanisms of ocular diseases. The chair was established with a gift from the Harvey & Bernice Jones Charitable Trust, a strong supporter of JEI for the past two decades.

Arkansas Children’s Hospital

Richard F. Jacobs, M.D., was invested May 19 as the inaugural holder of the Robert H. Fiser, Jr., M.D., Endowed Chair in Pediatrics at ACH. Jacobs has been chairman of the Department of Pediatrics since 2007 and served as chief of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Section for 16 years. He has been president of the Arkansas Children’s Hospital Research Institute since 2004. Fiser oversees enormous growth and transition in pediatric care and training at UAMS and ACH as department chairman from 1975 to 1994. The chair is funded by the ACH board of directors.

José Romero, M.D., was invested Sept. 9 as the Horace C. Cabe Endowed Chair in Infectious Diseases at ACH. Romero joined the faculty in July as chief of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Section. He previously was a professor of pediatrics and pathology, microbiology and director of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Section at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. Romero is a member of the FDA Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee and the National Board of Medical Examiners. The chair was fully funded in 1996 with gifts from the Horace C. Cabe Foundation.

Eldon G. Schulz, M.D., was invested June 11 as the first recipient of the Rockefeller Chair for Children with Special Healthcare Needs at ACH. Schulz is section chief of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics and Rehabilitative Pediatrics and a professor in the departments of Pediatrics and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in the College of Medicine. He is medical director of ACH Rehabilitative Services. The endowment will help Schulz address economic issues faced by families of children with special needs. The chair was funded with a gift from the Winthrop Rockefeller Charitable Trust.

Jerry G. Jones, M.D., was invested Oct. 9 as the inaugural recipient of the Arkansas Children’s Hospital Auxiliary – Jerry G. Jones, M.D., Chair in Child Maltreatment at ACH. Jones, who joined the faculty in 1978, is a professor of pediatrics, chief of the Children at Risk Section and director of the Center for Children at Risk. The ACH Auxiliary funded the chair in recognition and support of Jones’ leadership in providing comprehensive, compassionate care for abused children and their families.
Meet Our Scholars

Meet Our Scholars

Learn how these future doctors, who are among this year’s scholarship recipients, plan to make a difference

John Baird

John Baird of Little Rock spent his summers working at UAMS, including two as an undergraduate research fellow in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He graduated from Washington University in Saint Louis with a degree in biomedical engineering.

During the summer before his sophomore year of college, a family member suffered a massive hemorrhagic stroke. Baird was moved by the life-saving, quick intervention and comforting patient care and decided to pursue a career in medicine.

“My professional goal is to leave a lasting impression on my field, and to be a source of knowledge and teaching for colleagues,” he said. “I would love to work in cutting-edge neonatal or cardiovascular surgery.”

Jerry McKenzie

Jerry McKenzie discovered his love of science as early as fifth grade. The West Memphis native went on to graduate with a degree in neuroscience from Vanderbilt University, where he spent time tutoring students in neuroscience, basic science and math.

“I initially planned to major in molecular and cellular biology and pursue a career as a biomedical researcher, but volunteering at my local hospital and taking health-related courses increased my interest in becoming a physician,” he said.

He aspires to have a career as both a clinician and researcher. His current medical interests include psychiatry, neurology, endocrinology and psychopharmacology.

Alex Neville

Watching nature shows with his father spurred Alex Neville’s interest in science. “I’ve wanted to be a doctor as far back as I can remember,” he said. “It became a concrete goal of mine in junior high when I really began to think about my aspirations.”

Neville, of Little Rock, graduated with a degree in biology from the University of Central Arkansas at Conway.

His medical interests include pediatrics, dermatology and neurology. “I also worked as a nurse aide in a neurology unit, which gave me a lot of experience with various neurological disorders and inspired a lot of interest,” he said.

Ashlie White

Ashlie White, a North Little Rock native, graduated from Emory University in Atlanta with a degree in psychology. The hands-on labs during her undergraduate research solidified her interest in science and medicine.

She spent a summer doing research to learn more about how disease affects Alzheimer’s patients’ cognitive function. That’s when she realized she was contemplating more on how to treat the patients and make their life more productive.

“After that, I knew that medicine was definitely for me because I’m really not one for sitting back and observing when I could be actively working towards fixing a problem,” she said.

Blake Williams

It was Blake Williams’ inquisitive nature that had an impact on him at an early age. He credits his teachers and volunteer experience in shaping his path to a career as a physician.

“In some respects my interest in medicine is an extension of my interest in science,” Williams said. “When I volunteered at a pediatric clinic in Little Rock, I was exposed to the humanistic side of medicine, which really solidified my desire to pursue medicine.”

Williams graduated with a degree in biochemistry and a minor in mathematics from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. His undergraduate synthesis research in organic chemistry earned him a fellowship from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

Fueling Big Dreams

Arkansas will need more doctors in the decades ahead, and the College of Medicine (COM) is striving to meet that need. Besides expanding enrollment, the COM has embarked on a major campaign to strengthen its scholarship endowments and offer more substantial scholarships.

“Although our tuition is one of the lowest in the country, our students leave UAMS with an average of nearly $125,000 in debt – a figure that can be discouraging to many future physicians,” said Judith McClain, executive director of the Medical Alumni Association.

“It is more important than ever to ensure an affordable, accessible and quality education for our state’s most promising students,” McClain said. “Scholarships attract the best and brightest from every economic circumstance. We want to make sure they come to UAMS.”

For more information about the scholarships campaign, please contact Judith McClain at (501) 526-4330, or by e-mail: JMcclain@uams.edu.
As a married couple in the College of Medicine’s M.D./Ph.D. program, fourth-year medical students Cindy and Gautam Gandhi are learning the latest developments that will impact medicine together. The research training will provide them with a greater understanding and unique perspective to view medical problems.

“Theirs is definitely a need for people who can appreciate, combine and translate both basic research skills with clinical medicine,” Gautam said.

The rigorous M.D./Ph.D. program currently has 23 students and takes six to eight years to complete. The combined degree program introduced Cindy and Gautam to medicine during their first two years at UAMS. They spent the next four years completing their doctoral degrees in neuroscience before they returned to finish the last two years of medical school.

Cindy is from Batesville, and Gautam is from Blytheville, towns just 130 miles apart in northeastern Arkansas. They met in the eleventh grade at the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences & the Arts boarding school in Hot Springs and soon began dating. Though undergraduate school separated them for three years, they were well on their way to jointly pursuing careers as physician scientists.

Early on in his life, Gautam knew he would be in medicine, and the M.D./Ph.D. program was the best way to supplement his love for research. “I was good at science and I think the best application of my abilities was the best way to supplement my love for science and medicine,” he said. “With the program, I could develop my scientific interests, still apply it to people and improve patient care.”

Cindy was enrolled in the medical degree program but after enjoying a summer research project at UAMS, she followed suit and joined her husband in the combined program. “We were going to be in school for the same amount of time so it made sense,” she said. “We didn’t have to worry that I would go into a residency earlier or get separated.”

The couple married in 2006, a year before defending their theses and obtaining their doctorates in neuroscience. They will enter the residency match in 2009 as a couple—Cindy in general surgery and Gautam applying for neurosurgery.

“The advantage of having both degrees is that we can be in the clinic, identify key problems and actually be able to have the skills to take it back to the lab to ask those questions,” Gautam said.

Spending time outside the lab or classroom without medicine on their minds hasn’t always been easy. “I think our standard conversations revolve around this patient or this question. We chat about medicine all the time,” Gautam said.

However, preparing for their careers side-by-side has been the best support. “This way we can bounce things off each other,” Cindy said. “Sometimes you get stuck on an idea and you can really troubleshoot by talking to each other.”

If there were a “Residency Guide for Dummies,” it might have helpful sections like this: “Doing research as a resident,” “Applying for top fellowships,” “How to handle XYZ patient,” and “How to survive on-call.”

Until earlier this year, UAMS anesthesiology residents passed down information and advice solely by word of mouth. No centralized location existed for residents to learn what to expect on a certain rotation, obtain background information on a particular field or study new research in the anesthesia subspecialties.

The anesthesiology residency wiki site is just that. The online resource can be used and edited by all residents and promotes collaborative authorship and learning in the field. “Think of a wiki as any normal web site—it is accessed online and can be read just like a series of web pages. Experts can collaboratively add and edit any content on the site just like the most recognizable wiki, Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia.”

Former resident Carmen Keith, M.D. ’04, started the wiki site in January 2008, and it launched to residents in May. Though the site was still in its infancy when Keith moved to Boston for a fellowship, she passed the reins to the 2008-2009 site keeper, Jason Holt, M.D. ’04, a fourth-year resident.

“We are a generation that grew up on technology,” Holt said. “Studies have shown we are learning less from sitting in lectures with a syllabus in hand. The wiki site is a tool that we needed for the online-minded generation.”

The site allows users to collaborate on projects, compile data and share results and their own expertise. “It’s designed to be a forum so residents can ask questions, get answers, bring knowledge and get feedback. Online textbooks, call and rotations schedules also are posted.

“It is a great tool and the only limit is the time and the motivation required to keep it going,” Holt said. “It’s a bonus to us because we are limited on time being a resident. This way we can absorb information on the wiki on our own time.”

The wiki site has unlimited potential for future communication and education in anesthesia. As Holt says, the site is what you make of it, where you take it and how hard you push it.

“When our year is up, we will pass it down to the next year’s residents and they will take the torch,” Holt said. “We are giving back to the residents with this educational resource. Information will continue to be shared and accessible.”

As a married couple completing the last leg of the M.D./Ph.D. program, it works.

Cindy and Gautam Gandhi can’t help mixing their personal and professional lives. As a married couple completing the last leg of the M.D./Ph.D. program, it works.
At Ibn Sina Hospital, the uncertainty of the next minute can be hard to bear. The next helicopter could bring patients with any number of injuries caused by roadside bomb blasts, explosive devices and gunshots. Nicknamed “Baghdad ER,” it lies inside the city’s heavily protected Green Zone and serves as the emergency facility for critically wounded soldiers and civilians. It also treats suspected and confessed insurgents.

U.S. Army Maj. Todd Baker, M.D. ’01, is chief of emergency medicine at Ibn Sina and one of three emergency room physicians providing coverage 24 hours a day. He oversees a team of doctors, medics and nurses who all live inside the hospital, ready to go within seconds of receiving word that casualties are coming.

“Being a board-certified emergency medicine physician, I was used to trauma and caring for sick patients,” Baker said. “But how many double amputees are routinely treated in trauma centers back home in the states? Since my tour of duty, I don’t think there is anything I have not seen.”

Helicopters fly nonstop – the way 90 percent of patients arrive at the hospital. The emergency crew is usually notified that inbound patients are coming in, and if the wounded soldiers make it to the hospital alive, they have a 97 percent survival rate.

“Serving as the major referral center for everywhere south of Baghdad, we never know how many patients we will see on a given day,” he said. “Many days are slow, with very few coming in. Other days are non-stop and you feel like you are swimming in a sea of patients, never able to catch up. The one certain thing is that you never know what the next helicopter is going to bring.”

After he graduated from the College of Medicine (COM), Baker went to the Darnall Army Community Hospital in Ft. Hood, Texas, to train in emergency medicine. He became the Regimental Surgeon for the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, which became the 2nd Cavalry Regiment Stryker Brigade Combat Team. In 2006, he served as teaching faculty in the emergency medicine residency program at Madigan Army Medical Center. He was deployed to Fort Campbell, Ky., in September 2007 to join the 86th Combat Support Hospital and will serve in Iraq until January 2009.

Like Baker, many COM alumni, faculty and residents have been deployed overseas to be the first line of defense for saving lives. Col. Anne Mancino, M.D. ’84, an associate professor of surgery at UAMS, was assigned to the 345th Combat Support Hospital at the Al Asad Airbase in northern Iraq for three months in early fall. It was her third time serving in the war in Iraq.

“Tragedy has become routine, Baker said, but he is encouraged each day by keeping a positive outlook. His crew has formed a family – one that celebrates after each life they save and one that mentally prepares for the next casualty to arrive.

“Despite the sadness, terror and fatigue, my crew and I will always hold our heads high remembering what we’ve done over the past 15 months,” he said. “It’s been an honor to be the eyes they look into for relief when lying on a bed wounded.”

Alumni care for the wounded a world away from the COM

The Call to Serve

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a great need for medical specialists to care for the worst casualties and combat injuries. College of Medicine faculty, alumni and former residents have spent extended time in the war zones and abroad in service.

Col. Laurie O. Hughes, M.D., is a former resident and a physician on the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital orthopaedics team. The colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve returned last July from a four-month tour of duty in Afghanistan, where she was a surgeon handling front-line trauma. Hughes also was a member of the 874th forward surgical team at the Kirkuk Air Base in Iraq in early 2004.

Richard Rowe, M.D., an associate professor of neurosurgery, was stationed in Landstuhl, Germany, from September 2007 to February 2008. There, the captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve received and cared for the American casualties leaving the war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Former orthopaedic surgery resident Spencer Guinn, M.D., of Jonesboro, Ark., spent six months in Iraq in 2003 tending to American soldiers and Iraqi citizens as a major in the U.S. Army Reserve on the 1st Forward Surgical Team. William Hayes, M.D. ’02, also served as a field surgeon in 2004 for Operation Iraqi Freedom.
2008 College of Medicine Hall of Fame Inductee - I. Dodd Wilson, M.D.

UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson, M.D., has given more than 20 years of extraordinary service to the campus and Arkansas. As dean of the COM from 1996 to 2000, he oversaw rapid growth of the college’s programs.

Since becoming chancellor in 2000, Wilson has advanced UAMS’ reputation for world-class patient care, education, research, and service. He has been at the helm of the largest expansion in UAMS’ history, and his leadership has garnered substantial private and public funds to support the effort.

The multi-faceted project includes a 500,000-square-foot hospital addition that will open early next year. A new Psychiatric Research Institute building is nearly complete, and a 12-story addition to the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute is under way.

Under Wilson’s leadership, UAMS has expanded health care services throughout Arkansas. In recent years he has focused on preparing UAMS to meet the state’s needs for more physicians and health care professionals in the future.

Wilson has announced plans to retire in 2009.

2008 Distinguished Faculty Award - John Dornhoffer, M.D.

Dornhoffer is a professor and director of the Otology/Neurotology Division in the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery and the Samuel D. McGill, Jr., Endowed Chair in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. Dornhoffer is known for his research in reconstructive surgery with prostheses that are used worldwide for middle ear reconstruction. He is particularly well known for his work related to hearing loss and the inner ear and Ménière’s disease, a condition that causes hearing loss and severe dizziness.

Many organizations have recognized Dornhoffer’s achievements. The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery presented him with its Honor Award this year. He has been listed in “Best Doctors in America” for the past 10 years and is consistently named one of the “Best Doctors in Arkansas” by the Arkansas Times.

2008 Alumni Association Awards

An alumnus who became a medical leader in the U.S. military, an internationally known College of Medicine (COM) hearing loss specialist, and a professor and director of the Otology/Neurotology Division in the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery.

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Dean’s Society

Our faculty and staff are only part of the “village” that our students need to succeed. College of Medicine (COM) alumni share their time, wisdom and resources. We are grateful for their many contributions.

Founded in late 2006, the Dean’s Society has helped to fund projects such as library renovations that created an improved study environment for students and, more recently, a biomedical informatics initiative. Dean’s Society members have pledged to make annual unrestricted gifts to the College of Medicine.

Individuals ($1,000)

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- Dr. and Mrs. William C. Ullery
- Dr. and Mrs. David M. Yeazell

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- Dr. and Mrs. Lee R. Archer
- Drs. Sarah and Michael Carter
- Dr. and Mrs. William C. Ullery
- Dr. and Mrs. David M. Yeazell

Recent Graduates (past 10 years; $500)

- Brian T. Beas, M.D.

List includes members as of Dec. 15, 2008.

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2. Access your class roster and touch bases with classmates.
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Visit Us Online www.uams.edu/com/alumni
Ernest Ferris, M.D., (above, in 1978) has always loved to lecture to students and residents.

The equipment shown in this 1979 photo of the UAMS Interventional Radiology Suite was modern in its day. Three new generations of equipment have succeeded these machines. Ernest Ferris, M.D., brought comprehensive subspecialty training and highly-specialized radiological care to Arkansas.

Today, UAMS has some of the most sophisticated imaging equipment of any medical school in the country.

As chairman of the Department of Radiology for 31 years, Ferris stepped aside as chair in May but continues to serve as a faculty member in the department. The interventional and vascular radiologist has trained more than 250 residents and 100 fellows through the years. Many practice in Arkansas. Four went on to chair radiology departments at other institutions.

“What makes me happiest is helping young physicians realize their dreams of practicing radiology,” he said. “This is a complicated, dynamic and ever-changing specialty.”

“I could write a book chapter about how my teacher, Dr. Ferris, affected my life,” said Tom Koonce, M.D., ’81, an interventional radiologist in Little Rock. “I view him as my second father. He is a stern, forging, demanding, supportive and loving man. He cares as much about his students as he does about himself. He is a rare individual.”
Cover story:
UAMS & the COM get ready to produce more physicians for Arkansas

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In the Spotlight:

On the cover: Peter O. Kohler, M.D., a former College of Medicine department chair and interim dean, has returned to Arkansas to lead the development of a satellite campus in Northwest Arkansas. He is pictured in the lobby of the former Washington Regional Hospital in Fayetteville, which will be converted into a campus to help UAMS address shortfalls of physicians and other medical professionals in Arkansas. (Stories begin on page 2.)

On the cover:

Stopping the Hurt: UAMS’ Sunny Anand has made medical care for premature babies less painful.

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Baghdad ER: Alumni & faculty care for the wounded.

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Features:

University of Arkansas Medicine
The magazine of the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

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We welcome your comments
Send us your thoughts, story ideas and concerns. Contact Tamara Robinson at (501) 526-5163; by e-mail: tlrobinson@uams.edu; or mail to: College of Medicine, 4301 W. Markham St., #550-1, Little Rock, AR 72205-7199.
The College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has achieved nearly 130 years of phenomenal growth and success in teaching, clinical care, research and service since our founding in 1879. As Arkansas’ only medical school, we train the majority of the state’s physicians. We strive to help them acquire not only the ultimate in medical skills, but also the professional and ethical standards that will ensure the very best care for patients. Our world-class clinicians and researchers serve on the forefront of medical advances. Our faculty are on staff at UAMS Medical Center, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, the UAMS Area Health Education Centers and numerous other clinics and facilities providing services throughout the state of Arkansas and for patients from around the world.