Piecing together the causes of birth defects
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On the cover: Charlotte Hobbs, M.D., Ph.D., is a professor and chief of the Birth Defects Research Section in the College of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics and director of the Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. She has received more than $37 million in grants and state appropriations for birth defects research, surveillance and prevention activities since 1996. Hobbs has dedicated her career to solving some of medical science’s toughest puzzles. Our profile starts on page 2.
You may be astounded, as I am, at the incredible pace of change in medicine today. Not so many years ago we marveled that the world’s entire biomedical knowledge was said to be doubling every two decades. Today, some contend that it is doubling in half that time – or less.

Our researchers and clinicians are on the forefront of this rapidly changing biomedical landscape.

Charlotte Hobbs, M.D., Ph.D., featured in our cover story (starting on page 2), is one of the nation’s leading birth defects researchers. She and fellow investigators are turning their attention to new fields of exploration – such as epigenetics, the study of changes in gene expression due to non-genetic factors – to unravel the causes of birth defects.

At the same time, Dr. Hobbs notes that the search for new discoveries and better medical care is a long and continuous journey. Much is learned every day, and yet there’s so much more to learn. Dr. Hobbs and colleagues at the Arkansas Children’s Hospital Research Institute have begun recruiting participants in Benton County for the nation’s largest-ever study of children’s health, a massive endeavor that will track children across the country from before birth through age 21.

Meanwhile, the avalanche of new knowledge about genetics is changing clinical medicine (and medical education) forever. Bradley Schaefer, M.D., the founding director of the College of Medicine’s Division of Genetics, has his hands full. As you’ll read in our feature (starting on page 6), Dr. Schaefer is launching UAMS’ Personalized Medicine Clinic, which will use genetic analysis to help tailor medical planning and treatment for individual patients.

Last fall, he and Kent McKelvey, M.D., opened UAMS’ Adult Genetics Clinic. Because of advances in the understanding of Down syndrome and other disorders, patients with many conditions are living longer – making the adult clinic and its expertise more vital.

Moving discoveries into actual medical practice and improving health is what it’s all about, of course. This July we’ll complete the first year of work under UAMS’ largest ever research grant – a $19.9 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA). The grant (see page 10) places UAMS in an elite consortium of the nation’s top research institutions and is helping us to pick up the pace of translational research.

Enjoy this issue!

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.
Dean, College of Medicine
Vice Chancellor, UAMS
Lifelong inquisitiveness led to a multifaceted educational and career journey for researcher and pediatrician Charlotte Hobbs.
Charlotte Hobbs, M.D., Ph.D., was a child in Ontario, Canada, in the 1960s when scientists first linked folate deficiency in pregnancy with neural tube defects. It would take 30 years of additional research, however, before folate recommendations were issued for women, foods began to be fortified with folic acid, and massive educational campaigns vastly reduced the incidence of neural tube defects.

“We’ve gained some knowledge from researchers who came before us, but we have not yet identified the causes of most birth defects,” said Hobbs, a professor and chief of the Birth Defects Research Section in the College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics.

Some birth defects are caused by a single gene or chromosomal abnormality, or a specific teratogen, Hobbs explained. However, about 70 percent are due to a complex interaction between environmental exposures, lifestyle choices, and genomic and epigenomic susceptibilities.

“But it can take such a long time to identify causes, there has to be a strong belief that the causes can be found,” Hobbs said. “Fortunately, recent advances in genomics and epigenomics allow us to look into the black box of causes with new tools.”

And that’s what keeps Hobbs going. “I strongly believe that there are causes that are yet to be found,” she said. “I hope that our work, along with that of other scientists throughout the world, will lead to new discoveries that will reduce the numbers of babies born with defects.”

One in every 33 babies in the United States is born with a defect. In Arkansas, a baby is born with a birth defect every five hours, and every four days, a baby dies because of a birth defect.

Hobbs, who trained as an epidemiologist as well as a physician, is director of the Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention—one of the nation’s leading centers—and scientific director of the Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention.
Reproductive Health Monitoring System. Since joining the faculty in 1996, she has been awarded more than $37 million in competitive research funds and state appropriations for research, comprehensive surveillance of birth defects in Arkansas and prevention activities.

Major New Study Hopes to Shed Light

This year, Hobbs and her colleagues are gearing up for the largest ever investigation of child health in the United States – the congressionally mandated National Children’s Study (NCS). Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the study will track more than 100,000 children at 105 sites across the country from pre-birth to age 21 to learn more about the causes and effects of many childhood diseases and how both genetics and the environment impact children’s health and development. It is hoped that the study will shed significant light on major health issues such as the rising prevalence of autism and prematurity rates.

Benton County in northwestern Arkansas is one of 105 selected sites for the NCS. Hobbs is the principal investigator of a $14.4 million, five-year grant awarded to the Arkansas Children’s Hospital Research Institute in 2008 to fund Arkansas' participation in the initial phase of the study. Jim Robbins, Ph.D., a professor of pediatrics in the College of Medicine (and, incidentally, Hobbs’ husband) is serving as the local site investigator.

This summer, in collaboration with Benton County obstetrical care providers, Hobbs and Robbins will lead a team of UAMS investigators in the launch of a pilot study to evaluate a novel recruitment method for potential NCS participants. UAMS will be joined by nine universities, including Yale, in the nine-month pilot project.

One of the earliest cohort studies nationwide will explore the impact of glucose metabolism imbalance on adverse pregnancy outcomes. Hobbs proposed this particular study while serving as the non-federal co-chair of the working group that designed the birth defects-related components of the overall study in 2001 through 2004.

On the Forefront

Hobbs’ achievements as director of Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention demonstrate why she was selected to co-chair the working group for the new study. The center is highly regarded among the nine programs of its kind funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The centers participate in the National Birth Defects Prevention Study, an earlier and continuing effort focused on congenital disorders. Hobbs is an active member of the genetic analyses workgroup and holds many other roles. The Arkansas center has the highest rates of participation of mothers in the CDC’s national case-controlled studies and is one of the first sites to engage in genomics research using samples from the national study.

The centers also conduct birth defects surveillance and independent research activities.

First funded in late 1997, the Arkansas center has been renewed for two additional five-year grant periods. Hobbs had just finished her pediatrics residency at UAMS and joined the faculty as an assistant professor when she began working on the initial grant. By then, her lifelong inquisitiveness and interest in health and science already had drawn her into a multi-faceted educational and career journey.

She's Always Asked “Why?”

“I loved the sciences and math when I was growing up,” Hobbs said. “I loved asking questions. I’ve always been very analytical and wanted to understand why things were a certain way.” She also wondered why some children were born with birth defects while others are not. Her own mother had been treated for an abdominal wall defect at birth and had suffered through a stillborn death in her first pregnancy and two later miscarriages.

Hobbs graduated from Carleton University in Ottawa with distinction in psychology in 1978. After earning a master’s degree in human communication disorders at McGill University in Montreal in 1981, she began working with children who were hearing impaired or had other disabilities that interfered with communication.

“But that left me with more questions than answers, in a way,” Hobbs said, explaining her decision to train as an epidemiologist in 1988.

While working toward a doctoral degree at McGill, Hobbs realized how much she also wanted to practice clinically as a physician. After being accepted at 10 medical
schools, she decided to attend McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, because it was in the forefront of clinical epidemiology and evidence-based medicine, which are essential building blocks for translational research. Hobbs completed her doctoral dissertation while attending medical school. She received her doctoral degree in epidemiology and biostatistics in 1991 and her medical degree a year later.

**Building a Future in Arkansas**

Hobbs met Jim Robbins, a Little Rock native and professor of medical sociology and psychiatry, while at McGill, and the couple married the year that she graduated from medical school. Hobbs decided to specialize in pediatrics, and after interviewing for residency in several programs – including Duke and Boston Children’s Hospital – the couple decided that UAMS and Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) were ideal for both of them. Robbins joined the Pediatrics faculty and Hobbs started her residency in 1993.

Their first child, Benjamin, was born in 1995, and twins Samuel and Emma followed in 1997. That also was the year that the Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention received its initial funding, with Hobbs serving as co-director alongside Pat Casey, M.D., a longtime faculty member. In 2001 Hobbs was named chief of the Birth Defects Research Section of the Department of Pediatrics.

In 2002, the center was awarded a second five-year grant, and Hobbs, who had been promoted to associate professor, took the reins as director. In 2004, Hobbs was invested as the Pamela D. Stephens Endowed Chair for Birth Defects Research at ACH. In 2008, she received the UAMS College of Medicine’s Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award.

Hobbs has been a member of the Neonatology Section in the Department of Pediatrics since joining the faculty. “I love caring for newborns and being part of a neonatal team,” she said. “When I attend deliveries of babies who are born with birth defects or other neonatal problems, my passion to continue our research tasks is renewed.”

**The Search Goes On**

Hobbs’ reputation as a world-class birth defects researcher has grown over the years through her leadership in the National Birth Defects Prevention Study, the National Children’s Study’s birth defects working group, and other activities. Since 2005, she also has served on the National March of Dimes Scientific Advisory Committee on Prematurity.

Meanwhile, Hobbs and other researchers have made progress in unraveling the causes of birth defects. Among many findings, the National Birth Defects Prevention Study confirmed links between maternal obesity and several birth defects, including spina bifida, in which obesity doubles the risk. More also has been learned about the links between smoking and congenital heart defects and craniofacial abnormalities such as cleft lip or palate. Unfortunately, surveillance in Arkansas has shown that 28 percent of mothers smoked during early pregnancy, double the percentage of mothers in center locations such as California, Hobbs said.

Hobbs envisions a day when physicians will have a cadre of tests that can check for biomarkers that reveal the risk for birth defects prior to conception. She and her colleagues are exploring possible links between oxidative stress and congenital heart defects. They have found that women who have had babies with congenital heart defects had higher levels of homocysteine in their blood, and the researchers are continuing to look at metabolites, common genetic variants and possible epigenetic factors, which involve changes in gene expression due to non-genetic factors.

“I think one of our most rewarding, lifelong responsibilities is to use our talents, skills and resources to find new ways to improve the wellbeing of all people,” Hobbs said. “As a clinician-scientist investigating causes of birth defects, I feel privileged to be able to combine my medical skills and knowledge with rigorous epidemiological methods to discover new ways to improve the health of our children and those of future generations.”
Division of Genetics Director
Bradley Schaefer, M.D.
(standing at back) and Kent
McKelvey, M.D., review
genetic studies.
Karen Jobe brought a long checklist to her 22-year-old son John’s first visit with Bradley Schaefer, M.D., at UAMS’ new Adult Genetics Clinic. She had grown accustomed to having to explain things to health care providers over the years.

“My son has Rubenstein-Taybi syndrome. Here’s what we need to look for.”

But Schaefer, director of the Division of Genetics in the College of Medicine, understood the Little Rock mother’s concerns and the nuances of John’s rare genetic condition. He had a list of additional things that warranted testing in John’s case.

“I felt so relieved,” Karen Jobe said. “This clinic came along at just the right time for us.”

The clinic opened last August at Freeway Medical Tower in Little Rock, ushering in a new era of care for Arkansans with Down syndrome and hundreds of other genetic conditions. Headed by Schaefer and Kent McKelvey, M.D., the clinic serves adolescents and adults, including those who were cared for at Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) in their youth. It is one of only a handful of programs in the nation devoted to the care of adults with genetic disorders.

With the flood of new knowledge about the genetic links to health, it’s not surprising that the clinic is just one of several areas of focus for Schaefer, who joined the UAMS faculty as the founding director of the Division of Genetics in July 2008. The division provides adult clinical care, lends genetics expertise to research on campus, and coordinates genetics education in the College of Medicine.

“Schaefer also serves as chief of the Division of Genetics and Metabolism in the College of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics at ACH and as medical director of the genetics counseling training program in the UAMS College of Health Related Professions.

“I want Arkansans to have the very best genetics program available anywhere,” said Schaefer. “Our ultimate vision is that there won’t be a person in Arkansas who doesn’t have access to state-of-the-art services in genetics.”

Those services will include a cutting-edge Personalized Medicine Clinic in the near future, Schaefer said. Personalized medicine is an emerging specialty that uses genetic analysis to tailor medical care for a specific patient. It can help predict one’s susceptibility to disease or how a patient will respond to a particular medication.

Get Ready for Personalized Medicine

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services can help determine what a patient should do to stay healthy and much more.

“The potential is tremendous,” said Schaefer. “Genetic analysis and personalized medicine can be an amazing tool, but it must be handled appropriately. Nowadays people can actually order certain genetic tests online, but the report that they get back doesn’t help them at all with the issue of how to interpret the information or what to do with it.”

He said the clinic will offer a three-step approach. “We will meet with patients and obtain thorough information about their family history and their concerns, and we’ll help them understand what the testing can and cannot do,” he said. “Then we’ll conduct the tests. Finally, and most importantly, we’ll make sure our patients understand the results and give our expert recommendations for making the most of the information.”

**It’s Not Star Trek**

Schaefer plans to launch a wide array of other specialized genetics clinics in partnership with UAMS physicians in other disciplines. He already has initiated one, in conjunction with the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, for patients with genetic-based retinal disease. He is working with other UAMS leaders on psychiatric-genetics and cardiac-genetics programs. Neurogenetics and other areas are being explored.

“Discipline by discipline, the genetic aspects of a multitude of conditions really are a part of day-to-day medicine,” Schaefer said. “It’s not ‘Star Trek.’ It’s here and now, and we’re working to make sure that every medical resident and medical student has a solid understanding of genetics.”

“I play a game with first-year medical students that I call ‘Stump the Chump,’” Schaefer said. “I dare them to name an area of medicine that they could go into that genetics doesn’t figure into. In 20-some years, no one has ever stumped me. One guy thought he had. He wanted to go into aerospace medicine. But the timing was beautiful, because my colleagues and I had just received a grant to send fruit flies into space to look at mutation rates in weightlessness.”

**Arkansas’ Only Clinical Geneticists**

Schaefer and his faculty are the only medical geneticists in Arkansas. Prior to his arrival, UAMS’ McKelvey was the only physician in the state specializing in adult genetics. Stephen Kahler, M.D., a UAMS professor of pediatrics practicing at ACH, was the only other board-certified clinical geneticist. Schaefer has since recruited another pediatric geneticist, Adolfo Garnica, M.D., to practice at ACH.

“We need to build a critical mass of medical geneticists in Arkansas,” Schaefer said, adding that he is recruiting for another faculty member on the pediatrics side and two adult geneticists to be based at UAMS.

McKelvey has directed cancer genetics services in the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute since 2003. The clinic has been in such high demand that McKelvey – who also served as a clinician in family medicine, course director of the sophomore genetics class and pre-doctoral education leader in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine – was booking patients as far as two years in advance. Since Schaefer’s arrival and McKelvey’s shift to genetics full-time, the two have been able to virtually eliminate the backlog.

**Patients Grow Up, but Their Needs Go On**

McKelvey also was instrumental in efforts that led to the creation of the Adult Genetics Clinic and its subspecialty clinic for adult patients with Down syndrome. Lisenne Rockefeller, the widow of philanthropist and former Lt. Gov. Winthrop Paul Rockefeller, established an endowment in her husband’s name that made it possible to establish the multi-service, time-intensive clinic.
“The new clinic allows us to give patients the extra time and attention they require in order to evaluate and address their individual needs,” McKelvey said. “Appointments with patients who have Down syndrome can take as long as an hour and a half because of the challenges of diagnosing complex physical and behavioral problems. Physical problems often present as behavioral change due to communication difficulties.”

Down syndrome is the most prevalent of hundreds of genetic disorders that require specialized evaluation and ongoing monitoring and care. Decades ago, many of these conditions were viewed as pediatric disorders because of the tragically short life expectancy of patients. Today, medical advances have vastly expanded life expectancy, making specialized adult care more vital.

“Unfortunately, adult providers often aren’t ready to provide this specialized care,” McKelvey said. “It can be a very big shock for patients who turn 21 and can no longer see their pediatric specialist and can’t find an adult physician with knowledge of their specific condition. Changing payer and benefit services combined with the realities of the business of medicine make this a very challenging time for special needs patients across Arkansas. Our clinic is here to help.”

Schaefer is active at the national level on issues related to “medical transitioning” of patients with genetic syndromes. He and McKelvey are developing a sub-clinic within the Adult Genetics Clinic to help patients and their families coordinate the shift to adult care. They also established a “continuity of care” sub-clinic, headed by a genetics nurse specialist, to coordinate comprehensive follow-up services after the initial phase of evaluation and consultation with Schaefer or McKelvey.

The clinical team strives to make life easier for its patients and their families, McKelvey said. For example, a patient from Paragould, Ark., with Down syndrome needed five outpatient surgical procedures early this year. The team coordinated with several UAMS programs to provide them all on the same day, saving the family from making multiple 300-mile round trips to Little Rock.

JOHN’S STORY

The Adult Genetics Clinic was a godsend for 22-year-old John Jobe and his parents, Karen and Harry Jobe, of Little Rock. Rubenstein-Taybi syndrome is an extremely rare congenital syndrome characterized by particular facial features, broad thumbs, broad big toes, varying degrees of mental retardation and behavioral traits.

John is primarily non-verbal, speaking only in single-syllable, one-word utterances that can be difficult for most people to understand. His mom believes he is borderline autistic. Still, he loves to watch movies and plays video games – often very well. Funny voices crack him up, and he enjoys watching children play.

John fills his family with joy. “Everything that he accomplishes means that much more to us because we know it was that much harder for him to do,” said Karen Jobe.

The Jobe family was navigating the complex transition to adult care when their pediatrician recommended UAMS’ new Adult Genetics Clinic. From the first visit, Schaefer and his team plotted a course for ongoing care.

A bone-weakening vitamin D deficiency was uncovered and is being addressed. The continuity clinic director, Donna LeBlanc, M.S.N., A.P.N., found a primary care physician at UAMS for John and also arranged the services of a dietitian to help John with weight issues. LeBlanc coordinated a consultation with Easter Seals to determine if a new-generation communication device could help John, who was unsuccessful with communication equipment many years ago.

“Donna really has a heart for these kids, and Dr. Schaefer and the entire staff are terrific,” Karen Jobe said. “They’re there for us when we need them.”
“Collaboration is essential in translational research. None of us could do this independently.”
AMS oncologist Issam Makhoul, M.D., is heading innovative research that could reveal which breast cancer patients are likely to benefit from a drug designed to prevent tumors from producing the blood vessels they need to grow.

He'd be the first to tell you that he couldn’t do it alone.

“Collaboration is essential in translational research,” said Makhoul, an associate professor in the College of Medicine’s Division of Hematology/Oncology who is working with scientists in the lab, as well as fellow oncologists and patients in the clinic, to search for breakthroughs in cancer treatment. “None of us could do this independently.”

Makhoul and his collaborators got a boost in January, when they received one of the first 15 pilot studies grants awarded by the UAMS Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR). The CCTR is the umbrella for a broad range of programs and initiatives supported by the $19.9 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) that UAMS received from the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) last July.

“Rainmakers” Mike Owens, Ph.D., and Sudhir Shah, M.D., along with clinical researcher Issam Makhoul, M.D., are some of the many scientists under the collaborative umbrella of UAMS’ Center for Clinical and Translational Research.
Off and Running

The CTSA grant, UAMS’ largest ever research award, places the university in an elite consortium of the nation’s top research institutions. The NCRR, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), created the consortium to accelerate the translation of research findings into improved clinical treatments and public health initiatives and to increase the number of translational researchers working toward these goals.

“As members of the CTSA consortium, we have access to a world of resources that we didn’t have access to before,” said Curtis L. Lowery, M.D., the principal investigator and director of the CCTR and chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the College of Medicine. “It’s up to us to use them to improve health care and, most importantly, to improve the health of Arkansans.”

Since receiving the CTSA, faculty members and leaders from UAMS’ five colleges and graduate school have worked to develop the CCTR’s core programs. A dozen key components were established, including a Novel Methodologies and Pilot Studies program, which administers the new pilot study awards, and a Research Education, Training and Career Development program, which launched a new training grant program in February. Other programs were developed to streamline regulatory processes, provide bioinformatics support, engage communities in research, and much more.

The CCTR also enlisted some of the campus’ most experienced clinical and translational researchers, named “rainmakers” and “pathfinders,” to identify and drive translational research at UAMS and ensure that junior investigators have the mentoring and career development support they need to thrive.

Making Rain

“The Novel Methodologies and Pilot Studies program is finding opportunities for innovative translational research at UAMS and making sure investigators have the resources they need to be successful,” said Co-director Michael Owens, Ph.D., a professor in the College of Medicine’s Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology who is nationally known for his own translational research program in antibody treatments for drug addiction.

“If we’re going to accelerate the pace of translating medical discoveries, we’ve got to build and support collaborative teams,” Owens said. “Clinical and laboratory-based scientists, as well as those working in community-based research, have to work together. Researchers in diverse research fields build on each other’s expertise, often having a synergistic effect.”

That’s where the rainmakers come in. “In folklore and in business, rainmakers make things happen,” said Sudhir Shah, M.D., a professor and chief of nephrology in the College of Medicine and Owens’ co-director in the Novel Methodologies program. “Our rainmakers are highly productive translational researchers who have a good feel for which ideas on campus are ready to move forward, and they know how to get it done.”

Owens, Shah and seven other faculty members on the rainmaker committee oversaw the comprehensive reviews of more than 50 applications for the first round of the annual CCTR pilot studies. They awarded 15 studies, totaling almost $1 million, in January. The grants provide seed money for promising young scientists, projects with the potential to quickly impact human health, and – like Makhoul’s cancer research - innovative studies by collaborative, multidisciplinary teams of established investigators.

Makhoul’s collaborators in the lab include Susan Kadlubar, Ph.D., and Robert Griffin, Ph.D. Kadlubar is an associate professor in the College of Medicine Division of Genetics and a nationally known expert in the use of
genetic analysis to predict an individual’s response to drug treatments. Griffin, an associate professor in the Department of Radiation Oncology, is on the forefront of research into angiogenesis, the development of the vascular network in tumors that allows them to grow.

They hope to identify specific genetic profiles that explain why some patients respond well to an anti-angiogenetic drug called Bevacizumab when it is given in conjunction with standard chemotherapy in the early stages of breast cancer. In a previous clinical trial led by Makhoul, the additional drug increased the response rate by 50 percent across a wide spectrum of breast cancer patients. “These results were good news,” Makhoul said. “But based on traditional criteria, we were not able to define who would respond to this treatment and who would not. We knew we had to go back to the laboratory.”

Bolstered by a $96,000 CCTR pilot study grant, the researchers will analyze samples collected during the clinical trial to glean clues about genetic variations that could be involved. The data they generate this year could provide leverage for a larger, externally-funded clinical trial – and a powerful new tool for treating breast cancer.

Ensuring a Solid Path Forward

Like the rainmakers, the CCTR’s “pathfinders,” part of the Research Education, Training and Career Development program, are some of the campus’ most successful translational researchers. Pathfinders will match trainees with well-suited mentors and help guide the new researchers toward research independence.

“The entire nature of research is changing enough that we’ve got to train people in clinical and translational research,” said Robert McGehee Jr., Ph.D., dean of the UAMS Graduate School, a professor in the College of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics, and co-director of the CCTR’s educational program. “Mentoring and career development are absolutely essential.”

In February, the program filled the first two training slots in its KL2 Mentored Clinical Research Scholar Program and awarded nearly $200,000 in support to the two researchers – Wáng “Steve” Cheung, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor in the College of Medicine’s Department of Pathology, and Holly Felix, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the College of Public Health.

The CCTR plans to have two new awardees per year, up to a total of six trainees. The grant provides two years of protected time to develop a research program, along with training and mentoring.
Family Medical Center Gains NCQA Recognition

The College of Medicine’s recently launched Patient Centered Medical Home™ (PCMH) has garnered Level 3 recognition – the highest level – from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

The Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, led by Chairman Daniel Knight, M.D., established the PCMH to provide enhanced team-based care, more comprehensive services and greater access for patients in the UAMS Family Medical Center. The initiative was supported by the Dean’s Office and Dean’s Society contributions.

The NCQA, a leading private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality, assesses PCMH applicants on nine standards, including access and communication, patient tracking and registry functions, care management, patient self-management support, electronic prescribing, test tracking, referral tracking, performance reporting and improvement, and advanced electronic communications.

“The Patient-Centered Medical Home is helping us to provide more comprehensive services for our patients,” Knight said. “It also allows us to provide an even richer training experience for our students and residents, which will lead to better primary care in the future for patients throughout Arkansas.”

Knight was named department chairman in July 2009. He has held several leadership posts since joining the faculty full time in 1999, including acting chairman in 2006-2007 and during the year preceding his current appointment. An award-winning educator, Knight directed the Family Medicine Residency from 1999 to 2009 and was director of education from 1999 to 2004. He was named vice chairman in 2007. He received his medical degree from the College of Medicine in 1985 and trained at UAMS. Knight serves on the board of the Arkansas Academy of Family Physicians.

Dermatology Chair Brings Residency Training and Research Expertise

Cheryl A. Armstrong, M.D., was appointed chair of the Department of Dermatology in November 2009. She was recruited to UAMS in May 2008 with her longtime colleague, John Ansel, M.D., who chaired the department until his death last August. Armstrong has directed the Dermatology Residency since December 2008. She also serves as chief of dermatology at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System.

Armstrong graduated from Indiana University School of Medicine in 1984. She completed a research fellowship and dermatology residency at Oregon Health Sciences University. She held residency education and other leadership positions at Oregon, Emory University, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the University of Colorado Denver. Her federally-funded research focuses on cutaneous inflammation and the role of innate immunity and the cutaneous neurologic system on common skin disorders.

Westfall Appointed Ophthalmology Chair and JEI Director

Christopher Westfall, M.D., assumed leadership of the Department of Ophthalmology and the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute (JEI) in January 2010. He previously was vice chairman of the department, chief of oculoplastic surgical services at UAMS Medical Center, John L. McClellan Veterans Hospital and Arkansas Children's Hospital, and chairman and medical director of UAMS' Ophthalmic Technologies Program. He holds the Pat Walker Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology.

Westfall graduated from Ohio State University College of Medicine in 1976. He completed a surgery residency at Keesler Air Force Medical Center, an ophthalmology residency at Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base, and a fellowship in oculoplastic and reconstructive surgery at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary and Harvard Medical School. Before coming to UAMS in 1997 he chaired the Air Force Ophthalmology Residency Program at Lackland, directed the Army and Air Force Residency Program, and was the chief ophthalmology consultant to the Air Force Surgeon General.
Leading Skull Base Surgeon Named Neurosurgery Chair

J. D. Day, M.D., joined the faculty as chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery in April 2010. Day is an international leader in skull base surgery and specialist in Gamma Knife surgery and vascular disorders of the brain and skull base. He previously was director of cranial base surgery, vice chairman for academic affairs and associate residency director in the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Day graduated from the University of Washington School of Medicine in 1989. He completed a neurosurgery residency at the University of Southern California Medical Center and a research fellowship in cranial base surgery and anatomy at the University of Vienna in Austria. Day has held neurosurgery leadership posts at the prestigious Lahey Clinic in Boston and the House Ear Clinic in Los Angeles. He has authored four textbooks on skull base surgery and published over 80 articles on neurosurgical topics.

Faculty Scientist Appointed Chair of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

Kevin Raney, Ph.D., a College of Medicine scientist who studies enzymes that help build and maintain the body’s DNA, was named chairman of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in June 2010. A native Arkansan, Raney joined the faculty in 1995 and became a full professor in 2007. He led the UAMS Proteomics Core Facility from 2002 to 2007. He directed the Medical Biochemistry Course in 2002-2005 and currently lectures in 10 courses.

Raney earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry with distinction from Hendrix College in Conway in 1986 and a doctorate in organic chemistry from Vanderbilt University in 1992. He continued his training as a National Institutes of Health (NIH) postdoctoral fellow at the Pennsylvania State University. Raney has authored 47 peer-reviewed manuscripts and eight review articles. He served on the NIH Study Section for Molecular Genetics in 2004-2008 and currently is the principal investigator on three NIH grants.

Epilepsy Expert to Lead Department of Neurology

L. John Greenfield, M.D., Ph.D., has been appointed chairman of the Department of Neurology, effective July 1, 2010. Greenfield is a nationally known expert in the cellular mechanisms of epilepsy, the mechanisms and actions of antiepileptic drugs and the body’s regulation of sensitivity to those medications. He previously was a tenured professor and vice chair for research in the Department of Neurology and a tenured professor in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Toledo College of Medicine.

Greenfield graduated from Yale University in 1980. He received his Ph.D. in neuroscience from the University of Virginia in 1988 and his medical degree at the school the following year. Greenfield completed a residency in neurology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1993 and served on the faculty for six years while also completing a fellowship in electroencephalogram (EEG) and epilepsy. He was recruited to the University of Toledo in 1999.

Tariq Named Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Clinical Education

Sara Tariq, M.D., an associate professor of internal medicine, was appointed assistant dean for undergraduate clinical education in July 2009. The new post was created to oversee the continued integration of clinical education into the basic science years of the curriculum. Tariq continues to care for patients, direct the Introduction to Clinical Medicine II course and serve as medical director of the Center for Clinical Skills Education.

Tariq received her medical degree from the College of Medicine in 1998. She completed her residency in general internal medicine at Brown University in Providence, RI. Tariq has focused extensively on education since joining the UAMS faculty in 2002. She has received numerous teaching awards and has been invited by the graduating class to give the “senior charge” at Honors Convocation four times.
Richard A. Harper, M.D., was invested as the inaugural recipient of the Sally McSpadden Boreham Chair in Ophthalmology on June 4, 2009. Harper is a professor and vice chair for education in the Department of Ophthalmology and director of UAMS’ Low Vision Clinic. He joined the faculty in 1993 and has become nationally known for his innovative work in educating residents. The chair was established with a gift from its namesake, a silent philanthropist who supported the Jones Eye Institute and numerous organizations.

Paul H. Phillips, M.D., became the first recipient of the Stella Boyle Smith/Gissur J. Petursson, M.D., Chair in Ophthalmology on June 4, 2009. Phillips is a professor of ophthalmology and chief of ophthalmology at Arkansas Children’s Hospital who joined the faculty in 1997. He is an expert in treating pediatric patients and adults with strabismus and neuro-ophthalmologic disorders. Smith was one of the Jones Eye Institute’s first major donors. Petursson served on the faculty for 26 years and has continued as a volunteer since retiring in 2000.

Larry J. Suva, Ph.D., was invested as the inaugural holder of the Carl L. Nelson Chair in Orthopaedic Creativity on September 8, 2009. Suva is a professor in the departments of Orthopaedic Surgery and Physiology and Biophysics and founding director of the Center for Orthopaedic Research. He was recruited to UAMS in 2000 by Nelson, who chaired the department from 1974 until his death in 2005. Suva’s internationally recognized research has focused on the skeletal consequences of disease, including the mechanisms of tumor metastasis to bone.

John B. Cone, M.D., became the inaugural recipient of the Norma and Nolie Mumey, M.D., Chair in Surgery on October 21, 2009. Cone, who joined the faculty in 1983, is a professor and chief of the Division of General Surgery, director of the UAMS Trauma Service and medical director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. He helped draft the Arkansas Trauma Systems Act and is the statewide system’s first medical director. The chair was funded by the late Nolie Mumey, a 1916 graduate who became a prominent surgeon in Denver, and his wife Norma.

Daniel A. Knight, M.D., 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. (Read more about Knight on page 14.) The Garnett Chair is named after one of Arkansas’ earliest physicians and was funded with a gift from his daughter-in-law, the late Rose Kirkpatrick Garnett, and with gifts from faculty, former graduates and Arkansas physicians.
Stacy A. Rudnicki, M.D., a professor in the Department of Neurology, was invested as the inaugural holder of the Kathryn and J. Thomas May Professorship in Neurology/ALS on March 3, 2010. Rudnicki has cared for patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) at UAMS since 1992 and led the development of the Muscular Dystrophy Association-certified MDA/ALS Research and Clinical Center. Friends and colleagues of the Mays, who are widely known for their civic and philanthropic contributions, funded the professorship. Tommy May has been under Rudnicki's care since 2005.

Jay M. Kincannon, M.D., a professor of dermatology and pediatrics, was invested as the Thomas Jansen, M.D., and Frances B. Jansen Chair in Dermatology at UAMS on May 21, 2010. Kincannon, a 1985 UAMS graduate, joined the faculty in 1991. He served as interim department chairman in 2007-2008 and currently is chief of pediatric dermatology at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Thomas Jansen, now retired, was a national pioneer in dermatology who helped establish UAMS' program in the 1950s and then served as department chairman for two decades.

Arkansas Children’s Hospital

G. Bradley Schaefer, M.D., became the inaugural recipient of the Committee for the Future Endowed Chair in Genetics on July 7, 2009. Schaefer is the founding director of the College of Medicine's Division of Medical Genetics and chief of medical genetics and metabolism for the Department of Pediatrics and Arkansas Children's Hospital. (Read more about Schaefer and the division on page 6.) The chair was established with a gift from the Committee for the Future, a volunteer group of young professionals in Pulaski County who support ACH.

Robert Arrington, M.D., a professor in the Department of Pediatrics, was invested as the inaugural holder of the Walmart Endowed Chair in Neonatology on Nov. 3, 2009. Arrington, who joined the faculty in 1974 and has served as chief of the Neonatology Section since 1978, has been a driving force in shaping neonatal care in Arkansas. He is co-medical director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at ACH. The endowed chair was funded with a gift to ACH from Walmart, a national sponsor of the Children’s Miracle Network.

Stephen M. Schexnayder, M.D., was invested as the Morris and Hattie Oakley Endowed Chair in Pediatric Critical Care Medicine on Jan. 6, 2010. Schexnayder, who joined the faculty in 1991, is a professor in the departments of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. He is chief of the Critical Care Medicine Section and medical director of the Donald W. Reynolds Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at ACH. The chair was created in 2001 with a gift to ACH from the Oakley estate.
When seniors from other medical schools visit UAMS for elective rotations, they often find a welcome mat at the door of College of Medicine students and residents.

It’s a great arrangement for students visiting an unfamiliar city and campus. They get an affordable, comfortable place to stay for the month – and often the host’s companionship and insider’s knowledge of UAMS and Little Rock. It’s great for the hosting students and residents as well, providing a little extra money to help make ends meet.

It’s also a boon to UAMS, by enhancing the experience of potential future residents. Visiting senior rotations are an important tool for College of Medicine departments to get to know some of their residency applicants while those applicants get to know UAMS.

“The rental income is a nice perk,” said UAMS 2010 graduate Nicki Harp, who provided a room for visiting students while she was on rotation elsewhere and hosted students while she was in town. “But for me it was really about meeting new people and trying to make their rotation here a little easier and more enjoyable.”

About 80 students from other medical schools visited UAMS for rotations last fall, triple the number from six years ago, according to Sharanda Williams, the senior year education specialist in the College of Medicine. For the past several years Williams has maintained a list of students, residents and the occasional staff members who had rooms available.

“Most of our students have done away rotations themselves, so they know what it’s like to go to a place where you don’t know anyone,” Williams said. Students often offer their own rooms for modest rent while they are away on rotations themselves.

UAMS was University of Mississippi student John “Jac” Chapman’s third “away” rotation in an unfamiliar city.

“When I got here, I felt such an uplift,” said Chapman, who stayed in the home of UAMS anesthesiology resident Megha Karkera during a rotation in dermatology. “She drove me around Little Rock, showed me the best route to the hospital and introduced me to other residents and interns.”

UAMS 2009-10 senior Nicki Harp (left) hosted Charya By, a visiting senior from the Medical College of Georgia, in the fall.

COM students and residents provide visitors with a place to stay – and an insider’s view of UAMS.

ROOM with a VIEW

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Meghan and Shane Lyerly grew up in small towns in northeastern Arkansas, and the College of Medicine students are eager to return to rural Craighead County to practice family medicine.

They’re also intent on repaying a gift from another rural northeastern Arkansas native who helped make medical school possible for them and many others over the past four decades.

Dorothy Snider Surles never met the couple – or perhaps any of the aspiring physicians or nurses who have received scholarships from the Dorothy Snider Foundation since 1972. In the past 20 years alone, the trust that she established before her death in 1969 has provided $1.23 million in scholarships for more than 150 College of Medicine students.

The late philanthropist grew up in Manila – only 25 miles or so from Brookland, where the Lyerlys plan to join the practice of Meghan’s aunt and uncle. In 1938 Dorothy married Grover Snider, whose family had significant land holdings and a large mercantile. The Sniders moved to Memphis, Tenn., where Grover died in 1955. Dorothy remarried a few years later.

“Dorothy Snider Surles had a special place in her heart for the people of rural northeastern Arkansas and western Tennessee, and she knew that these areas needed more doctors,” said Bruce Newton, Ph.D., assistant dean for undergraduate medical education in the College of Medicine and vice chair of the foundation’s distribution committee.

The scholarships originally were small and broadly distributed. Today they are only granted to medical students at UAMS and the University of Tennessee-Memphis, and are as high as $7,000 per year. Since 1988, the foundation has required the school to match the funds with other scholarships such as rural practice scholarships. Snider scholarship recipients are encouraged to eventually repay their gift so that more will benefit in the future.

“Because of our heritage, Meghan and I are very familiar with the people of rural northeastern Arkansas and their struggles with health care,” said Shane Lyerly. “We hope we can make a difference.”

“We are so grateful to have been blessed with the Dorothy Snider Foundation scholarship, as well as the rural practice scholarship,” he said. “It has really reduced the amount of unsubsidized loans we’ve needed.”

After graduating next year and completing their residencies, the Lyerlys will join the practice of Meghan’s uncle, Scott Stubblefield, M.D. ’87, and aunt, Sandra Stubblefield, M.D. ’88. Scott Stubblefield received the Snider scholarship when he was in medical school – and he, too, has paid it back.
B. Lawrence Riggs, M.D.  **COM Honors a Legend in Osteoporosis Research and Care**

Alumni Lawrence Riggs, M.D., is enjoying retirement in Little Rock after an extraordinary career at the Mayo Clinic.

**Thomas E. Andreoli, M.D.**  **UAMS Remembers an Icon in Internal Medicine**

Thomas E. Andreoli, M.D., was a “towering figure in American Medicine,” as one UAMS colleague described the former Nolan Chair of Internal Medicine who died in April 2009.

Andreoli made landmark observations about the mechanics of water transport in the kidney early in his career and lent his expertise to seminal publications on kidney function and internal medicine. He was editor-in-chief of “Andreoli and Carpenter’s Cecil Essentials of Medicine.” He also was a leader in many organizations including the American Society of Nephrology, the International Society of Nephrology and the American Society for Clinical Investigation.

Andreoli graduated at the top of his medical school class at Georgetown University in 1960. He completed a residency in internal medicine and a renal fellowship at Duke University and joined the faculty. He established the Division of Nephrology at the University of Alabama Birmingham in 1970 and led it to national prominence. In 1978 he became chairman of internal medicine at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston.

UAMS recruited Andreoli to chair the Department of Internal Medicine in 1988. He stepped down in 2004 to focus on teaching, research and patient care and remained a distinguished professor and chairman emeritus until his death.
For over four decades, 1955 College of Medicine alumnus B. Lawrence Riggs, M.D., built the Mayo Clinic into a world-renowned center for osteoporosis research and treatment. He and his colleagues developed the first instrument for measuring bone density at the spine and hip in osteoporosis and conducted many of the initial clinical studies to evaluate the efficacy of the major osteoporosis treatments used today.

“It was a high privilege to be involved in osteoporosis research at the beginning, when it was not even considered a disease but just ‘old age,’ and then in helping to show that it was one of the most devastating diseases associated with aging and to work out its causes and treatment,” Riggs said.

“Dr. Riggs is the pre-eminent world authority in the epidemiology, pathogenesis and treatment of osteoporosis and other metabolic bone disorders,” said longtime friend Stavros Manolagas, M.D., Ph.D., director of the UAMS Center for Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Diseases. “Larry has trained two generations of the world’s leading osteoporosis researchers, and he has maintained strong ties with UAMS.”

The Hot Springs native went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., for a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in endocrinology and joined the Mayo faculty in 1962. He was chairman of the Division of Endocrinology from 1974 to 1985 and later directed the General Clinical Research Center. He was the Tabor Professor of Medical Research at Mayo from 1987 until his retirement in 2003.

Riggs has published more than 500 scientific papers and served on many national and international study panels and editorial boards. He has been president of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR) and the National Osteoporosis Foundation, which presented him with its highest honor, the Legends of Osteoporosis Award, in 2009.

Riggs has garnered many other honors over the years, including Distinguished Alumnus awards from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1998, UAMS in 2000 and the Mayo Foundation in 2001. He also has received awards for excellence in clinical investigation from the Endocrine Society in 1989, the ASBMR in 1990 and the National Institutes of Health in 2003.

Since returning to Little Rock three years ago, Riggs has served on the Advisory Board of the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging at UAMS, where his daughter, Ann Riggs, M.D., practices and serves as vice chair for clinical affairs in the Department of Geriatrics. “It is very gratifying to see how UAMS has grown over the years to become such an outstanding center for teaching, practice and research,” Riggs said. “I am also very proud of the contributions of my daughter in the care of the elderly and their long-neglected diseases.”

Among many international honors, Andreoli was a fellow in the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh and London). He received numerous teaching awards and recognitions at UAMS. A visiting professorship was established in his honor in the Department of Internal Medicine in 2003. The Thomas E. Andreoli, M.D., M.A.C.P., Clinical Scholar Chair was established in 2005.

The late Thomas E. Andreoli, M.D., shed light on how the kidneys function and went on to teach and influence countless medical students at UAMS and beyond.
An exquisite loaf of artisan bread really amounts to a few key ingredients – expertly combined. For D. Brent Polk, M.D. ’84, a successful career as an academic physician-scientist is much the same. And he knows a lot about both.

Polk, who received the 2009 Distinguished Alumnus Award during Alumni Weekend last August, just wrapped up a 20-year career at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. In April he started a multi-faceted post as chairman of Pediatrics and vice president for academic affairs at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. He also serves as vice dean for clinical affairs at CHLA and as director of the Saban Research Institute.
He previously served as chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at Vanderbilt – a division that was renamed in his honor in 2008. He held the Vanderbilt Dean’s Chair since 2004, and served as interim chairman of the Department of Pediatrics in 2007-2008. He also directed the National Institutes of Health-supported Digestive Disease Research Center at Vanderbilt and is a national leader in gastroenteric research specializing in development of the intestinal epithelial cell and its role in disease repair.

Polk also is co-owner and co-founder of Provence Breads and Café, Nashville’s premier gourmet bakery with six locations, a production facility and 85 employees. His passion for good bread traces back to his days as a medical fellow at Stanford University, when he also found time to attend culinary school.

“It may seem like I do a lot of different things, but from my perspective I’ve actually tried to focus on just a few – and I’ve tried to do them well,” Polk said. “For medical education, the key ingredients include strong clinical programs, so you can successfully teach the clinical aspects of medicine, and strong research programs, so that you have opportunities to inspire the next generation of physician scientists.”

“I have greatly enjoyed working with fellows in Pediatric GI, and I really enjoy teaching medical students and graduate students,” he said. “I love taking care of patients. And I love the research side as well.”

In 2009, the house staff and postdoctoral fellows at Vanderbilt University Medical Center honored Polk with the Grant W. Liddle Award for outstanding mentoring and for encouraging the pursuit of research. Polk will continue to mentor his trainees at Vanderbilt until they complete their work.

“Physician-scientists have a very important role in linking discoveries at the bench with patient care, and in taking questions that develop while caring for patients back to the bench,” he said. “Questions asked well can lead to improved health care in the future.”

Polk was raised in England, Ark., and graduated magna cum laude from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia in 1980. He became fascinated with gastroenterology in medical school at UAMS, where the late Lawrence E. Scheving, Ph.D., then the Rebsamen Professor in Anatomical Science, introduced him to epidermal growth factor (EGF), a protein that became a focus of Polk’s research. (Scheving’s son, Lawrence A. Scheving, M.D. ’84, is on the faculty at Vanderbilt and nominated his UAMS classmate for the Distinguished Alumnus Award.) Scheving and other mentors, including physiology professor James Pasley, Ph.D., influenced Polk’s decision to go into academic medicine.

Polk stayed at UAMS for an internship and residency in pediatrics and went on to a fellowship in pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition at Stanford, where he worked with Nobel Laureate and DNA research pioneer Arthur Kornberg, M.D. He was recruited to the faculty at Vanderbilt University to work with another Nobel Laureate, Stanley Cohen, Ph.D., who discovered the EGF protein that Polk was studying in the intestine.

Over the next 20 years, Polk’s national stature grew. He currently chairs the American Gastroenterological Association Institute Council and co-chairs the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America Research Initiatives Committee. He also leads the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases’ Digestive Diseases and Nutrition Subcommittee. He also has served on the scientific advisory boards for the NIH Digestive Disease Centers at Stanford, University of California, San Francisco, and the Mayo Clinic, among others.

Back in Nashville, the bakery business run by his partner, Terry Carr-Hall, developed and thrived in tandem with Polk’s medical career, providing a different sort of fulfillment.

“Patient care, teaching and research take a lot of measured thought, and the rewards are often delayed,” Polk said. “I used to work behind the counter at the bakery on Saturdays because there was an instant reward to selling somebody the perfect loaf of bread.”
The safety of Arkansas’ drinking water, the veracity of tests performed on newborns and much more rests on the shoulders of Glen Baker, M.D. ’59. A look back at the career of the longtime UAMS leader and current director of the state Public Health Laboratory confirms that Arkansans are in very good hands.

Baker chaired the Department of Pathology from 1978 to 1981. His reputation as a superb administrator continued to grow through his service as associate dean for clinical affairs, interim dean, UAMS vice chancellor over managed care, and laboratory director at Arkansas Children’s Hospital. He retired as professor emeritus in 2003.

Baker was medical director of the American Red Cross Blood Services in Arkansas for 17 years. He was president of the Arkansas Medical Society in 1993-1994. He served as the six-state regional commissioner of the College of American Pathologists Lab Accreditation Program for seven years.

When the Public Health Laboratory lost its certification in 2005, Baker was recruited to turn it around. The laboratory’s status was quickly restored and the facility now has a strong reputation for quality.

“Glen’s expertise in laboratory operations is unsurpassed, and he leads in a gracious manner,” said Joseph Bates, M.D. ’57, the deputy state health officer and chief science officer at the Arkansas Department of Health. “He is a real whizbang.”

Baker chuckled at the characterization. “Well, it’s nice to be called a whizbang when you’re 80,” he said. “I enjoy my work more than anything.”
John C. Ansel, M.D., professor and chairman of the Department of Dermatology, died Aug. 7, 2009. Ansel held faculty and leadership posts at the Oregon Health Sciences University, Emory University, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the University of Colorado School of Medicine before being recruited to UAMS in 2008. In December 2008 he was invested as the first G. Thomas Jansen, M.D., and Frances B. Jansen Chair in Dermatology. A national leader in dermatology, Ansel researched the role of neurologic and immunologic systems in mediating inflammation in the skin and eye. His interests also included immunotherapeutic treatment for malignant melanoma.

Alan Elbein, Ph.D., professor and chairman of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology for nearly two decades, died Nov. 30, 2009. Elbein held faculty posts at Rice University in Houston and the University of Texas Medical School/University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio before coming to UAMS in 1991. He served in many national roles, including the NIH’s pathobiological chemistry and physiological chemistry study sections and on the editorial boards of numerous journals, including the Archives of Biochemistry and Biophysics, the Journal of Biological Chemistry and Glycobiology. Elbein was the College of Medicine’s Distinguished Faculty Scholar in 1996-97.

Normand B. Begnoche, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Donald W. Reynolds Department of Geriatrics, died April 5, 2010. Begnoche received his doctorate in psychology in 1996 at the University of North Texas. He practiced neuropsychology for many years, joining the Reynolds Institute in January 2009.

Hospitalist and Educator Leads General Internal Medicine
Jo Ann Wood, M.D., joined the Department of Internal Medicine as director of the Division of General Internal Medicine in August 2009. She is a hospitalist with broad experience in undergraduate clinical education, resident training and curriculum development.

Wood received her medical degree in 1997 from the University of Louisville School of Medicine, where she did her residency in internal medicine and pediatrics and then served for five years on the faculty. Wood completed a fellowship in faculty development at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and subsequently earned a master’s of science in medical education from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Most recently she received a master’s in health administration from the University of Minnesota, where she was an associate professor from 2006 until coming to UAMS.

IT Health Systems Expert Heads Biomedical Informatics
William R. Hogan, M.D., joined the faculty as the inaugural chief of the Division of Biomedical Informatics in November 2009. Hogan is a leading expert in systems interoperability, standards for electronic health records and the use of information technology to improve disease and health surveillance. The division will conduct research in biomedical informatics and provide strategic direction for informatics initiatives across campus.

Hogan received his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1993 and a Master of Science in intelligent systems from the University of Pittsburgh in 1999. He completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and a National Library of Medicine fellowship in medical informatics in the School of Medicine at Pittsburgh. He joined the faculty and served in a number of posts at UPMC, including director of medical vocabulary/ontology services.

News & Leaders
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The College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has achieved more than 130 years of phenomenal growth and success in teaching, clinical care, research and service since its 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.