

Message from Dr. Nancy Rusch

Executive Associate Dean for Research

Professor and Chair, Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology

Dear Faculty, Staff and Trainees,

All of us in the UAMS research community are weary of the COVID-19 pandemic with its fear of infection, masking, social distancing and day-to-day challenges. Some of you have asked me about what we can do to positively impact this situation. I understand this. Doing something positive raises our spirits while helping others.

The research chairs in the College of Medicine discussed this question with Dean Smyth at a meeting earlier this week. We felt that showing support and solidarity with our frontline workers in the COVID hospital units would be a great way to bring positivity to a tough situation. These employees come to work every day and take care of extremely ill and infectious COVID-19 patients, some of whom will not go home. Their families are at risk. As our hospital fills again with COVID-19 patients during the second surge, we are short of nurses, respiratory therapists and other boots-on-the-ground workers who are under tremendous stress.

We contacted the UAMS Hospital Auxiliary to find a project that the research community could help fund to show support for our frontline health care workers. The volunteers in the Auxiliary are excited to work with us and suggested that we help them establish a "Rejuvenation Room" in the hospital equipped with relaxing chairs, tea lights, sound machine, projected images (different wellness focus each day... aloe socks, smoothies, etc), snacks and other accessories. It would provide a place for frontline workers to relax before or after their shifts, or during breaks in patient care. Or even between shifts if they can't make it home.

The Auxiliary has been given a former waiting room in the hospital for this purpose, but they need funds to equip it. To initially launch the Rejuvenation Room, they need at least **\$5,000**, and more funds would make it even nicer and keep it stocked with snacks, etc. The Auxiliary has amazing volunteers and they said they also would love to have our input into planning the room. Rejuvenation/Resilience Rooms have been very helpful to staff at other hospitals. Please click on the podcast link below to read about the overwhelmingly positive response by health care workers to a similar room established at the Mount Sinai Hospital:

<https://www.mountsinai.org/about/newsroom/podcasts/road-resilience/recharge-room>

Starting today, our nonclinical/research departments (basic science, biomedical informatics, biostatistics, bioethics) are combining forces to raise at least \$5,000 for the Rejuvenation Room to honor our COVID-19 frontline workers. This is a significant and positive impact that we can make together to "fight back" against the impact of COVID-19 on our campus. I hope that you can give generously so we can quickly launch the Rejuvenation Room, because it is needed now.

Here is the link to donate to this project. Please click on the drop down arrow to find the UAMS Auxiliary Staff Rejuvenation Room. Be sure you open this link in Chrome and not Internet Explorer. Please write a note in the comment section to identify yourself as a researcher and your department. Donations are tax deductible and the Auxiliary said they would send everyone receipts for your tax records. I used the PayPal link this morning to donate and it is fully functional.

[UAMS Auxiliary Donation](#)

Please reach out if you have any questions. Let's do it! A chance to work together to make a difference!

Thanks very much,
Nancy

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