

Editor's Note: This archived PDF version of the e-newsletter does not precisely match the layout of the original email version. However, most of the links to external articles and other content remain active.



June 2021

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Meet Dr. Smyth: A Q&A with our New Dean



"Hook, line and sinker, I am all in for making our core vision of a healthier Arkansas a reality."

*UAMS welcomed **Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D.**, as Executive Vice Chancellor and College of Medicine Dean on June 1. We sat down with Dr. Smyth for a Q&A to help COM team members and friends get to know this new leader of medicine in Arkansas. Our conversation ranged from Dr. Smyth's insights on the college's evolving role in improving health in Arkansas, to her path to becoming a highly regarded cardiologist and researcher, to how she enjoys spending her free time.*

Q: What is the most pressing challenge for health and health care in Arkansas, and what will be the College of Medicine's role in addressing it?

A. Our most urgent challenge is to turn the tide on COVID-19 and do everything we can to protect our patients, students, colleagues and loved ones. The more highly contagious Delta variant of the virus is rapidly gaining ground in Arkansas, and this strain is making more unvaccinated people severely ill. I urge our team members and their families who aren't vaccinated to get vaccinated right away. And all of us must remain vigilant about wearing our mask in public and when we're around others at UAMS. It is important to follow established safety protocols. We cannot become complacent.

Aside from COVID-19, I think the most pressing and longer-term challenge for our state is the issue of health equity, and particularly the large health disparities we have in rural and underserved communities. It is imperative for us to ensure the best possible health and equitable access to excellent health care for every Arkansan ... [READ MORE](#)

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Happy Fourth of July!



In the Spotlight

CONGRATULATIONS New Endowed Chairholders



Elizabeth A. Sellars, M.D.

Recipient and steward of the
**Committee for the Future
Endowed Chair in Genetics**



Jessica Snowden, M.D., M.S., MHPTT

Recipient and steward of the
**Horace C. Cabe Distinguished Chair
for Infectious Diseases**

Congratulations to **Pediatrics** faculty members **Dr. Elizabeth Sellars** and **Dr. Jessica Snowden** on their May 27 investiture in endowed chairs at Arkansas Children's. Watch the [virtual ceremony here](#), and learn more about Dr. Sellars and Dr. Snowden in the [ceremony program](#).

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Leadership Appointments

Mario Ferruzzi, Ph.D., to head ACNC, Developmental Nutrition



Mario Ferruzzi, Ph.D., has been appointed Director of the **Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center** and Professor and Chief of the **Developmental Nutrition** Section in the Department of **Pediatrics**. He will join UAMS and Arkansas Children's Sept. 1.

Dr. Ferruzzi is currently the David H. Murdoch Distinguished Professor in the Plants for Human Health Institute at North Carolina State University. His research centers on identifying food science strategies that contribute to the development of nutritional products that prevent chronic disease and enhance the quality of life for populations around the world. [READ MORE](#)

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New Faculty



Matthew Jorgenson, Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Microbiology and Immunology** faculty as an Assistant Professor.

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Bolni Marius Nagalo, Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Pathology** as an Assistant Professor in the **Experimental Pathology** Division.

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Tisha Deen, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as an Associate Professor in the departments of **Psychiatry** and **Internal Medicine**.

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Greer Sullivan, M.D., MSPH, has rejoined the faculty as a Professor in the Department of **Psychiatry**.

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Samidha Tripathi, M.D., is rejoining the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor in July.

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Recent Grants



COVID DISPARITIES | UAMS researchers and their community partners across Arkansas are studying the causes behind COVID-19's devastating impact on minorities and developing plans to help increase vaccination rates. Supporting the one-year project is a \$1.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities. [READ MORE](#)



ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH | The **Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging** has been awarded a five-year, \$1.9 million grant from the National Institute on Aging, a division of the National Institutes of Health. The project, led by **Steven Barger, Ph.D.**, will focus on glucose transporter cells and their inability to deliver glucose to the brain in patients with Alzheimer's disease. [READ MORE](#)

Editor's Note: We plan to resume our monthly extramural grants list, courtesy of the COM Office of Research, as soon as possible. Please pardon this delay as the transition to Muse, UAMS' new compliance and research management platform, continues.

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Accolades



Have you read the latest *Accolades* from Dean Susan Smyth? The weekly email highlights recent honors and accomplishments of COM faculty, staff, residents and students. You can also [read Accolades here](#). If you know someone who deserves a shout-out, send your ideas to [COM Internal Communications](#).

UAMS team members and students named in Accolades this month:

Lana Abusalem
Muhammad Abu-
Rmaileh
Sclarlett Acklin
Jake Allison
Austin Anderson
Michael Angtuaco
Lindsay Arthur
Gohar Azhar
Lowry Barnes
Thaddeus Barter
Britney Beumeler
Amy Brooks
Brian Bumpous
Michael Bunyard
Jose Caceres
Ryan Campbell
Arabinda Choudhary
Harrison Cobb
Florenz Cruz-Artiga
David Davies
Shivang Desai
Jennifer Divino
Marcy Doderer
Tucker Doiron
Brandon Duke
Samuel Edogun
Sarenthia Epps
Georgia Gamble
Flavio Garcia-Pires
Paige Gocke
Michael Golinko
AlleaBelle Gongola
Santiago Gonzalez
Jared Gowen
James Graham

Fuad Habash
Iqbal Haq
Mallory Heft
Ronda Henry-Tillman
Madison Hershberger
Savannah Hickman
Tierra Holland
Xavius Hymes
Tina Ipe
Kyle Jackson
Sateesh Jayappa
Kayla Jimmerson
Donald Johann
Jerrilyn Jones
Manish Joshi
Kyle Kalkwarf
Mary Katherine
Kimbrough
Steven Ko
Alexander Kwok
Pat Magann
Nirvana Manning
Kent McKelvey
Kevin Means
Simon Mears
Nikhil Meena
Maria Meneses-Ramos
Steppe Mette
Edgar Meyer
Brandi Mize
Hamilton Newhart
Tamara Osborn
Carter Pacheco
Amanda Pangle
Hakan Paydak
Molly Peckham

Rangarajan
Purushothaman
Raghu Ramakrishnaiah
Rebecca Reif
Ramona Rhodes
José Romero
Eric Rosenbaum
Becky Sartini
Tanya Savenka
Khalid Sawalha
Zachary Schwartz
Elizabeth Sellars
Nidal Shah
Xochitl Shields
Stefany Sierra
Manisha Singh
Alexandria Smith
Jessica Snowden
James Sorensen
Tom South
Savannah Stacks
Jeffrey Stambough
Ben Stronach
Sara Tariq
Carol Thrush
LaSharon Tubbs
Srikanth Vallurupalli
George Vilanilam
Jeanne Wei
Christopher Westfall
Danny Wilkerson
Hannah Baer Wilkins
Michael Wilson
Fen Xia
Ramon Ylanan
James Yuen

COM departments represented in Accolades this month:

Anesthesiology	Orthopaedic Surgery
Biomedical Informatics	Pathology
Emergency Medicine	Pediatrics
Family Medicine	Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation
Geriatrics	Radiation Oncology
Internal Medicine	Radiology
Neurobiology/Developmental Sciences	Surgery
Neurology	Urology
Obstetrics/Gynecology	

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In Memoriam



Nancy M. Gray, Ph.D.

Dr. Nancy Munder Gray died June 2, 2021. She was President of **BioVentures** and a Professor in the Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology**. Recruited to UAMS in 2015, Dr. Gray brought more than 30 years of experience in biomedical industries and innovation to Arkansas. [READ MORE](#)



Rosalind S. Abernathy, M.D.

Dr. Rosalind Smith Abernathy died June 17, 2021. She served on the faculty in the Department of **Pediatrics** from 1957 to 2012 and was an early pioneer and known internationally for her clinical care, advocacy and innovative disease management for tuberculosis and sarcoidosis. [READ MORE](#)

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The *COMmunication* is published monthly to highlight key initiatives and developments in the COM, to introduce new faculty members and leaders, and to celebrate major professional honors and awards. The Dean's Office works in partnership with designated newsletter liaisons throughout the COM. To find your department's contact, read our submission guidelines or view past issues, visit the [COMmunication webpage](#).

Comments, questions and suggestions for improvements are always welcome. Call Tamara Robinson, Senior Communications Writer, at 526-5163, or click the red button below to email the *COMmunication*.

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