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August 2023

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Welcome, Class of 2027!



Interim Dean and Executive Vice Chancellor G. Richard Smith, M.D., congratulates Grace Guzman and hands her a copy of the Medical Student Oath after she dons her white coat.

The College of Medicine welcomed the new Freshman Class to the profession of medicine at the 2023 White Coat Ceremony on Aug. 4, with students taking the stage in both Little Rock and Fayetteville in a joint, livestreamed ceremony.

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Watch a [video of the ceremony here](#).



Freshmen at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus celebrated with family and faculty at Butterfield Trail Village in Fayetteville. (Click on the photo for a larger image!)



Matthew Spond, M.D., Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, delivers the faculty keynote address.



Students recite the Medical Student Oath in Robinson Center Performance Hall in Little Rock.

Little Rock ceremony photography by Bryan Clifton. Northwest Arkansas photography by Daniel Moody.

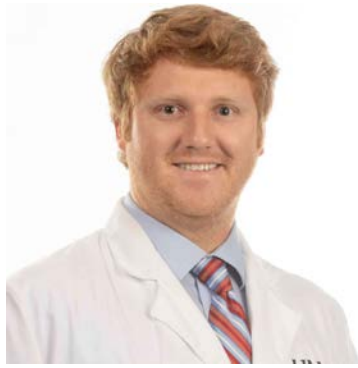


During Orientation Week, Freshmen in Little Rock gathered for a group photo on Hooper Drive. (Click on the photo for a larger image!)

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New Faculty

Please join us in welcoming these recent additions to the COM faculty – and watch for introductions of more faculty members who are joining us this summer and fall in upcoming issues of the *COMmunication*.



Bryce Ferry, D.O., MHA, has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Anesthesia**.
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Adam Watkins, M.D., has joined the Department of **Emergency Medicine** as an Assistant Professor.
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Diorella López-González, M.D., has joined the Department of **Family and Preventive Medicine** as an Assistant Professor.
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Samuel Stringfellow, D.O., has joined the Department of **Family and Preventive Medicine** and **UAMS Northeast Regional Campus** in Jonesboro as an Assistant Professor.
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Manojna Konda, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hematology and Oncology**.
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Syed Naqvi, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hematology and Oncology**.
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Ankur Varma, M.D., MPH, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Associate Professor in the Division of **Hematology and Oncology**.

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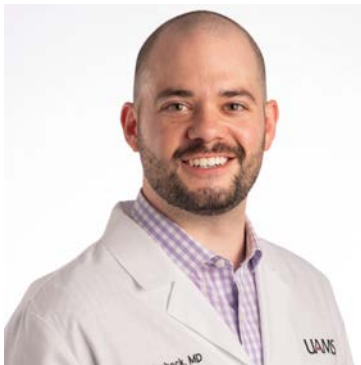
Sruthi Vellanki, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hematology and Oncology**.

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Hector Soriano-Baron, M.D., has joined the Department of **Neurosurgery** as an Assistant Professor and Co-Director of Joint Spine Services.

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Ryan Strebeck, M.D., has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **General Obstetrics and Gynecology**.

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Joseph Fixler, M.D., has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Maternal-Fetal Medicine**.

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Dayna Whitcombe, M.D., has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Maternal-Fetal Medicine**.

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Todd Brinkley, M.D., has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor.

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Uma Mahesh Matapathi, M.D., has joined the Department of **Radiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Radiology**.

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Thomas Kang, M.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Colorectal Surgery**.

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David Sterling, M.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Plastic Surgery**.

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Andre Ramdon, M.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Associate Professor in the Division of **Vascular and Endovascular Surgery**.

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Brian Langford, M.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Trauma** with a specialty in **Urologic Reconstruction**.

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Recent Grants



PRESTIGIOUS VA AWARD | Congratulations to **Andrew Morris, Ph.D.**, Professor of **Pharmacology and Toxicology** and the Mehta/Stebbins Chair in Cardiovascular Research, on receiving a prestigious Research Career Scientist Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Research and Development. The designation is for established investigators who have distinguished themselves through scientific achievements and substantial contributions to the VA research community. [READ MORE](#)



OSTEOCYTES & MULTIPLE MYELOMA | **Physiology & Cell Biology** Chair **Teresita Bellido, Ph.D.**, and Associate Professor **Jesús Delgado-Calle, Ph.D.**, recently received a five-year, \$2.26 million continuation award from the National Cancer Institute for their research into the contribution of osteocytes to the musculoskeletal effects of multiple myeloma. [READ MORE](#)



NON-OPIOID PAIN MANAGEMENT | A \$1.5 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will allow the Department of **Emergency Medicine** to revolutionize the ways in which it treats pain and trains new doctors. Associate Professors **Carly Eastin, M.D.**, and **Michael Wilson, M.D., Ph.D.**, are Co-Principal Investigators. [READ MORE](#)



CONCUSSION TREATMENT STUDY | The National Football League (NFL) and the NFL Players Association recently awarded \$526,525 to medical researchers, including **Neurosurgery** Professor **Erika Petersen, M.D.**, and **Anesthesiology** Associate Professor **Johnathan Goree, M.D.**, to study non-opioid alternatives for treating post-traumatic headache. [READ MORE](#)



ALZHEIMER'S INSIGHTS | **Steven Barger, Ph.D.**, Professor of **Geriatrics**, has received a five-year, \$1.9 million grant from the National Institute on Aging to support his research into the role of glucose transport in the progression of Alzheimer's disease. [READ MORE](#)



STUDENT RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT |

Congratulations to M.D./Ph.D. student **Ravi Sun** on receiving a highly competitive NIH F30 grant through the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. The four-year \$181,464 grant covers the cost of his research, plus tuition and a monthly stipend. Ravi is researching the role of the protein Angiopoetin-2 in the abnormal growth of lymphatic malformations.

Extramural Awards

Congratulations to College of Medicine faculty members who received new extramural grants in July. This list, courtesy of the College of Medicine Office of Research, excludes clinical trials and awards under \$10,000, as well as grants we have previously reported and those highlighted above.

Marie Burdine, Ph.D., Department of **Surgery**, DNA-PKcs Regulation of LAT-Mediated Early TCR Signaling in CD4+ and CD8+ T Cells (R21), National Institute of Health, (08/05/2023 – 07/31/2025), \$423,501.

Susan Emmett, M.D., MPH, Department of **Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery**, mHealth Tympanometer: A Digital Innovation to Addr, National Institute of Health on Deafness & Other Communication Disorders, (8/1/2023 – 7/31/2026), \$869,703.

Xiawei Ou, Ph.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, **Lorraine McKelvey, Ph.D.**, Department of **Family and Preventive Medicine**, **Ashley Acheson, Ph.D.**, Department of **Psychiatry**, 1/6 HBCD Prenatal Experiences and Longitudinal Development Consortium, National Institutes of Health, (07/01/2023 – 06/30/2026), \$1,262,198.

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Accolades



Have you read the latest *Accolades* from Interim Dean Dr. G. Richard Smith? 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:

Omar Atiq	Diane Jarrett	Paul Phillips
Nathan Avaritt	Akilah Jefferson	Ginell Post
Emily Barnes	Kristyn Jeffries	Zhiqiang Qin
Lowry Barnes	Donald Johann	Gloria Richard-Davis
Ariel Berlinski	Behjatolah Karbassi	Ahmed Sallam
Michael Birrer	Tom Kelly	Ronald Sanders
Jennings Boyette	Samantha Kendrick	Sara Sanders
Wayne Bryant Jr.	Annalyse Kohley	Beth Schmit
Gwendolyn Bryant-Smith	Soheila Korourian	Amy Seay
David Bumpass	Brian Koss	Divya Krishnan
Marie Burdine	Shashank Kraleti	Seethapathy
Martin Cannon	Dana Lawrence	Kevin Sexton
Rebecca Cantu	Yuet-Kin Leung	Jarna Shah
Chien Chen	Jonathan Laryea	Sara Shalin
Steve Cherney	Hong-yu Li	Brittany Slagle
Richard Crownover	Diorella López-González	Brendan Stack
Amrutha Denduluri	Anne Thompson Mancino	Matthew Steliga
Ruud Dings	Angus MacNicol	Aaron Storey
Rick Edmondson	Nicole Massoll	Ben Stronach
J. Reed Gardner	Rachel Mayo	Graham Strub
Meghan Gibson	Diane McKinstry	Ravi Sun
Lauren Gibson-Oliver	Priya Mendiratta	Jumin Sunde
James Graham	Corey Montgomery	Alan Tackett
William Greenfield	Mauricio Moreno	Sara Tariq
Robert Griffin	Bolni Marius Nagalo	John Ukadike
Sarah Beth Harrington	Richard Nicholas	David Ussery
Ronda Henry-Tillman	Cindy Nguyen	Jennifer VanEcko
D. Micah Hester	Vijay Patel	Emre Vural
Robert Hopkins Jr.	Alexa Pearce	Sharanda Williams
Tiffany Huitt	Eric Peterson	

COM departments represented in Accolades this month:

Anesthesiology	Ophthalmology
Biochemistry/Molecular Biology	Orthopaedic Surgery
Biomedical Informatics	Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
Dermatology	Pathology
Family/Preventive Medicine	Pediatrics
Geriatrics	Pharmacology/Toxicology
Internal Medicine	Radiation Oncology
Medical Humanities/Bioethics	Radiology
Neurobiology/Dev. Sciences	Surgery
Obstetrics/Gynecology	

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The *COMmunication* is published monthly to highlight key events, initiatives and developments in the COM, introduce new faculty members and leaders, and shine a spotlight on our work in education, research, clinical care and service to Arkansas. To 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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UAMS College of Medicine | 4301 W. Markham, #550 | Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

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