



## LEADERSHIP



### Dr. Steven Webber Named as Next Dean, Executive Vice Chancellor

**Steven A. Webber, MBChB, MRCP**, has been named Executive Vice Chancellor of UAMS and Dean of the College of Medicine, effective March 1. Dr. Webber joins UAMS from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, where he is the James C. Overall Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Pediatrician-in-Chief of the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital.

"Dr. Webber is a remarkable physician, researcher and administrator who has accomplished wonderful things at Vanderbilt," said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, UAMS Chancellor and CEO of UAMS Health. "I look forward to working with him as we accomplish great things at UAMS."

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"I look forward to working with the UAMS community to advance the clinical, educational and discovery missions of the university, and to share in the common goal of improving the health and well-being of all those living in Arkansas and the surrounding region."

- Dr. Steven Webber

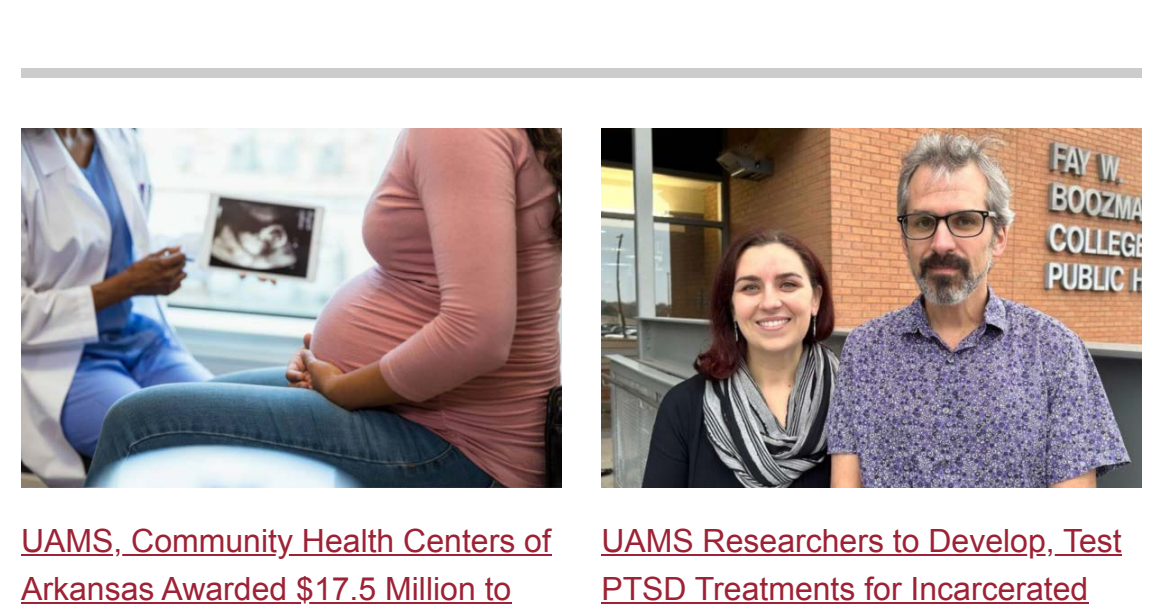
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## GRANTS & RESEARCH



(File photo: Residents at the UAMS Family Medical Center in Batesville)

**PAVING THE WAY FOR MORE PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS** | UAMS' ongoing efforts to recruit and retain medical students from rural or underserved communities received a boost with a \$17.6 million grant renewal from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). **Richard Turnage, M.D.**, Vice Chancellor for **UAMS Regional Campuses**, Executive Associate Dean and Professor of **Surgery**, is the Principal Investigator on the Medical Student Education program award. [READ MORE](#)



[UAMS, Community Health Centers of Arkansas Awarded \\$17.5 Million to Study, Reduce Prenatal Inequities](#)

[UAMS Researchers to Develop, Test PTSD Treatments for Incarcerated Individuals with Opioid Use Disorder](#)

## Graduate School Honors Student, Faculty Excellence

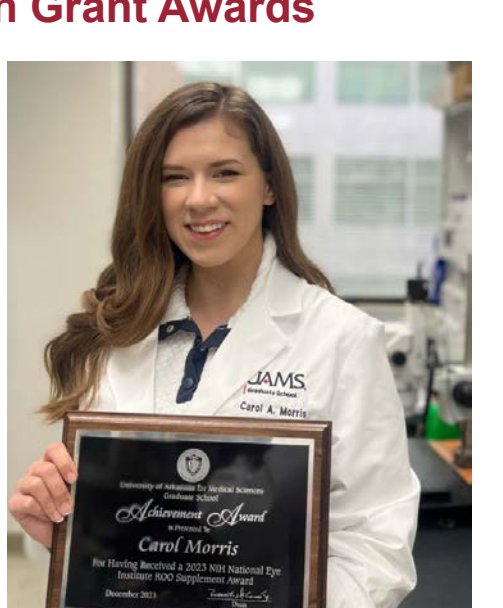


Congratulations to the many students and faculty mentors who were honored at the **UAMS Graduate School Winter Awards Reception**. **Sean Taverna, Ph.D.**, presided over his first official event as Graduate School Dean since succeeding **Robert E. McGehee Jr., Ph.D.**, on Nov. 1.

[Read more about Dr. Taverna here.](#)

## Graduate Student on a Roll with Grant Awards

Third-year graduate student **Carol Morris** has been awarded a highly competitive PhRMA Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship for her project aimed at developing new stroke treatments. Her research focuses on targeting the CD47/SIRPα axis to protect the brain from stroke damage. The \$62,000 grant will support her work for two years in the Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology** under the mentorship of Assistant Professor **Abdel Fouda, B.Pharm, Ph.D.**, and co-mentorship of Department Chair **Nancy Rusch, Ph.D.**



The grant wasn't the first for Ms. Morris, whose work is currently supported by a diversity supplement from the NIH National Eye Institute. The \$107,222 supplement to Dr. Fouda's R00 parent grant, awarded in September, supports part of Ms. Morris' thesis research into retinal ischemic injury. She was also among the students honored at the UAMS Graduate School Winter Awards Reception highlighted above.

## COM Announces 2024 Intramural Award Recipients

*Congratulations to the faculty who were awarded intramural awards from the COM Office of Research this month. All awards are for Jan. 4-Dec. 31, 2024.*

**Sturgis Endowment Grants**  
\$25,000 awards for diabetes and diabetes-related research. Funding for [Sturgis Endowment Grants](#) is provided by the Sturgis Foundation.

**Mahip Acharya, Ph.D.**, Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology**, Treatment trajectories and safety profile of semaglutide and tirzepatide among females of childbearing age with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.

**Giulia Baldini, Ph.D.**, Department of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, MC4R as target for GRK-dependent receptor desensitization in diabetic neurons.

**Yunmeng Liu, Ph.D.**, Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology**, Diabetes promotes hypertension via metabolic reprogramming of T cells.

**Shosha, Esraa, Ph.D.**, Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology**, Role of Endothelial HDAC3 in Pathological Retinal Angiogenesis of Diabetic Retinopathy.

**Pilot Study Grants**  
\$25,000 awards for pilot programs with high probability of obtaining extramural funding. Funding for the [Pilot Awards Program](#) is provided by the Barton, J.W. Amis, and Lorraine Armstrong Bennett Endowment.

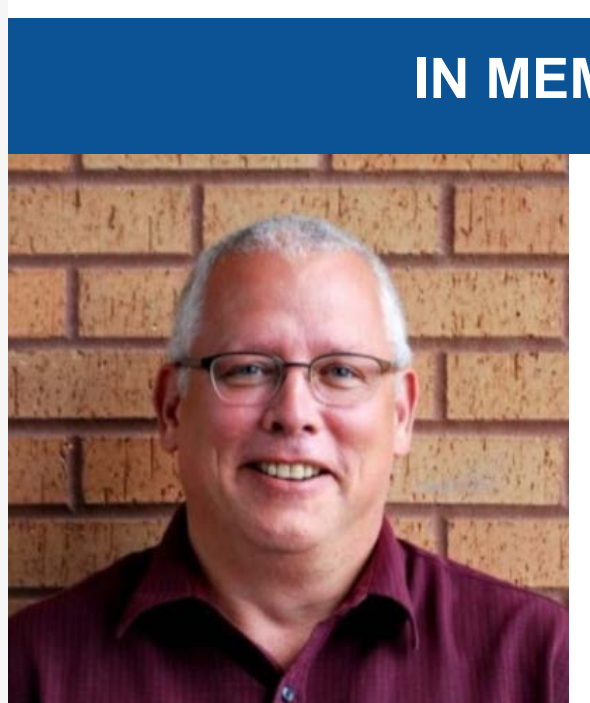
**John Arthur, M.D., Ph.D.**, Department of **Internal Medicine**, Antibiotic removal by continuous dialysis.

**Bolni Nagalo, Ph.D.**, Department of **Pathology**, Immuno-virotherapy for hypatocellular carcinoma.

**Benjamin Stronach, M.D.**, Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery**, Total Knee Under Tourniquet Use on Muscle Recovery after Total Knee Replacement.

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## IN MEMORIAM



**H.J. "Trey" Spencer**  
**Horace J. "Trey" Spencer III**, a biostatistician in the Department of **Biostatistics** for many years, died Dec. 10, 2023. Mr. Spencer was highly respected for his contributions to research teams across multiple departments and programs. He was a coauthor on more than 140 peer-reviewed manuscripts. Honors included the College of Medicine Staff Excellence Award for Research in 2018. [Read his obituary here.](#)

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