



Ready for Rotations

Joyful to *finally* be able to work with patients each day, rising M3 students marked the beginning of their next phase of medical school in a June 7 Oath Ceremony that capped the new Transition to Clerkships course.

The three-week capstone course provided students with targeted education about working in a clinical environment, with an emphasis on professionalism, communicating with patients, and how to be an effective member of the health care team, said **Becky Latch, M.D.**, Associate Dean for Student Affairs. At the end, students re-stated the Medical Student Oath, which they had first recited as incoming freshmen, alongside clerkship and college leaders.

"This was such an exciting and meaningful way to celebrate our students' move into clinical roles," Dr. Latch said. "We are grateful to **Drs. Elizabeth Kim, Angie Scott, Lindsey Sward and Heather Young**, and to team members **Micah Bolin and Jennifer VanEcko**, for their work and innovation in developing this course."



M3 student **Bilal Momand** said the course helped to reassure students and address any questions and concerns. "Additionally, getting to interact with a variety of faculty and M4s to hear their wisdom was so beneficial for preparing us for what the next year might bring."

"The Oath Ceremony was the perfect way to end the course, as it made us reflect on how far we've come as medical students," said Momand. "The excitement to finally see patients and put into practice the previous two years of medical school was a sentiment we all shared."

M3s are now ensconced in their first clerkships. Momand said he is "enjoying the thrill of early morning rounds and labor/delivery" and more on his OB/GYN rotation.



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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Brian Kirkpatrick Invested in Endowed Chair



Congratulations to **Brian Kirkpatrick, M.D., MSPH**, Professor of **Psychiatry**, on his investiture in the Dr. John Emmett Peters Endowed Chair in Psychiatry on June 13. As an internationally renowned expert in schizophrenia and related diseases, Dr. Kirkpatrick provides world-class care and leadership for the Odyssey Clinic in the Psychiatric Research Institute.

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COM Honors '80 Alumnus at Alumni Weekend 2024

The College of Medicine presented the 2024 Dean's Distinguished Alumnus Award to **A. Wesley Burks, M.D.**, a 1980 graduate who currently serves as Dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and CEO of UNC Health. Dr. Burks served on the UAMS Department of **Pediatrics** faculty from 1985 to 2003 and continues to collaborate with UAMS colleagues on internationally recognized research into peanut and other food allergies. Dr. Burks was honored during the Dean's Luncheon at Alumni Weekend on June 1.



Learn more about Dr. Burks in this [UAMS news release](#).

Read more about Alumni Weekend overall in this [UAMS web feature](#).

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RECENT GRANTS



GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH INTO HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE | In a major boost to cardiovascular research, the National Institutes of Health has awarded an additional \$3.7 million to **Shengyu Mu, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of **Pharmacology and Toxicology**, and colleagues to continue their groundbreaking study on the role of immune cells in hypertension. [READ MORE](#)

EXTRAMURAL GRANTS

Congratulations to College of Medicine team members who received new extramural grants in May. 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 or which are highlighted above.

UAMS:

Robert Eoff, Ph.D., Department of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, Replication of G-quadruplex DNA by translesion, National Science Foundation, (05/01/2024 – 04/30/2028), \$1,100,000.

Ronda Henry-Tillman, M.D., Department of **Surgery**, FY25 ADH ACPI Health Initiatives, Arkansas Department of Health, (07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025), \$377,337.

Matthew Jorgenson, Ph.D., Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**, Manipulating undecaprenyl phosphate levels to deci, NIH/Nat. Inst. of General Medical Sciences, (06/10/2024 - 04/30/2029), \$1,883,980.

Lin-Xi Li, Ph.D., Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**, Exploring early protective immune responses to ChI - Resubmission - 1, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, (05/10/2024 – 03/31/2026), \$408,116.

Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., **Internal Medicine/Institute for Community Health Innovation**, Home Food Delivery-YR 5 Continuation, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Nursing Research, (07/01/2024 - 6/30/2025), \$468,476.

Kevin Phelan, Ph.D., Department of **Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences**, AR Tech-DaSH: Arkansas Technology and Data Science, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, (05/02/2024 – 03/31/2029), \$1,208,275.

Nancy Rusch, Ph.D., Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology/College of Arkansas**, Connect Arkansas Research Scholars (CARS) Program, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, (07/01/2023- 6/17/2024), \$102,500.

ACRI:

Josh Kennedy, M.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, An Integrated Host-Microbe Gene Classifier to Predict SARS-CoV-2 and Severe Disease in Children with Respiratory Viral Coinfections, NIH, (06/01/2024 – 02/28/2029), \$3,314,250.

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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 and questions are always welcome. Call Tamara Robinson, Senior Communications Writer, at 526-5163, or send an email to COMInternalCommunications@uams.edu.