

## MESSAGE FROM THE Dean



Greetings, College of Medicine team!

August has been a whirlwind for many of us in the College of Medicine, perhaps especially for our new M1s. Hello, Class of 2028! It was wonderful to welcome you at Freshman Orientation and an honor to be a part of your White Coat Ceremony on Aug. 9. A shout-out to **Johnathan Goree, M.D.**, Associate Professor and Director of the Chronic Pain Division in the Department of **Anesthesiology**, for his inspiring words as the keynote speaker.

Hello also to all the new faculty members who joined us this month. We are so glad you are here. As a reminder, if you joined us in the past year, I hope to see you at the New Faculty Reception on Sept. 26. All who plan to attend should [RSVP here by Sept. 1](#).

The College of Medicine leadership team had new additions this month. **Alan Tackett, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Professor of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, will provide strong leadership for our research initiatives in his new role as Executive Associate Dean for Basic Science Research. This week, we announced the recruitment of **Ashley Booth Norse, M.D.**, from the University of Florida College of Medicine Jacksonville to serve as Chair of **Emergency Medicine**, starting next January.

Successful leadership transitions depend on the dedication, service and hard work of those who serve as interim leaders, and all team members. My thanks to everyone in **Emergency Medicine**, with special thanks to Interim Chair **Randy Maddox, M.D.**, and former interim chair **Greg Snead, M.D.** I am also appreciative of the team in **Microbiology and Immunology**, and very thankful to **Jon Blevins, Ph.D.**, who began serving as Interim Chair this month following the recent appointment of **Dan Voth, Ph.D.**, as UAMS Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Kudos also to **Sanjaya Viswamitra, MBBS**, who began serving as Interim Chair of **Radiology** last month, and his department colleagues.

Finally, thank you to **Robin Dreisigacker, J.D.**, for her exceptional service as Associate Dean for Finance and Administration. Robin has been a tireless advocate for our college since 2015. We said farewell to Robin this week as she returns to her home state of Arizona and assumes a leadership post with the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

I hope everyone has a great Labor Day Weekend!

*Steve*

**Steven A. Webber, MBChB, MRCP**  
Dean, College of Medicine  
Executive Vice Chancellor, UAMS

## WELCOME, CLASS OF 2028!



**White Coats, Big Dreams**

The College of Medicine's 175 new freshmen are off to a great start in their journey to become physicians. They donned a symbol of the profession at their White Coat Ceremony on Aug. 9, joined by loved ones, faculty and leaders of the medical community. The ceremony was held jointly in Little Rock and Springdale. [READ MORE](#)

*Pictured above: Rachel DeGood, from Jonesboro, dons her white coat with support from her father and grandfather, along with Lowe Academic House faculty advisors Karl Boehme, Ph.D., and Matt Spond, M.D. Below left: Keynote speaker Johnathan Goree, M.D., shares insights at the podium. Below right: Students and faculty at the UAMS Northwest Arkansas Campus recite the Medical Student Oath.*



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## LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

### Executive Associate Dean for Basic Science Research



**Alan Tackett, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Professor of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology** and Deputy Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, has been appointed Executive Associate Dean for Basic Science Research in the College of Medicine.

"Dr. Tackett has served in many research leadership roles at UAMS and Arkansas Children's and has an extensive portfolio of successful grants and scholarly accomplishments," **Steven Webber, MBChB, MRCP**, College of Medicine Dean and UAMS Executive Vice Chancellor, said in an Aug. 23 announcement to faculty. "Alan will provide excellent leadership as we work to expand basic science programs in the College of Medicine." [READ MORE](#)

### Department of Emergency Medicine Chair



**Ashley Booth Norse, M.D., FACEP**, Professor and Associate Chair of Operations in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine Jacksonville, has been named as the next Chair of the Department of **Emergency Medicine**. Dr. Norse, who will start on Jan. 6, 2025, also will serve as Clinical Service Chief for Emergency Medicine for UAMS Medical Center.

"Dr. Norse is known nationally and in Florida as an ardent emergency medicine physician, leader and patient advocate who has strived to improve standards and performance in her field and medicine more broadly," **Steven Webber, MBChB, MRCP**, College of Medicine Dean and UAMS Executive Vice Chancellor, said in an Aug. 26 announcement to faculty. "She will be an outstanding leader for our excellent programs, faculty and staff in Emergency Medicine." [READ MORE](#)

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## NEW FACULTY

*Please join us in welcoming these recent additions to the COM faculty - and watch for more introductions in upcoming issues!*



**Kristel Magsino, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Associate Professor. [READ MORE](#)



**Jessie Merrill, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor. [READ MORE](#)



**Calixto Romero, M.D.**, has joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor of **Emergency Medicine** and specialist in the **Medical Intensive Care Unit**. [READ MORE](#)



**Russell Roark, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Instructor in the Division of **Gastroenterology**. [READ MORE](#)



**Alan Baltz, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hematology/Oncology**. [READ MORE](#)



**Khristian Sunga, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hospital Medicine**. [READ MORE](#)



**Einnod Williams, M.D., MPH**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hospital Medicine**. [READ MORE](#)



**Eva Regel, D.Be.**, has joined the Department of **Medical Humanities and Bioethics** as an Assistant Professor. [READ MORE](#)



**Kristina Jones, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **General Obstetrics and Gynecology**. [READ MORE](#)



**Viktoriya Tulchinskaya, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology**. [READ MORE](#)



**Hannah Barkley, M.D., M.S.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Instructor and Pediatric Chief Resident. [READ MORE](#)



**Devin Cook, D.O.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Instructor and Pediatric Chief Resident. [READ MORE](#)



**Collette Tilly, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Instructor and Pediatric Chief Resident. [READ MORE](#)



**Hamza Hassan Khan, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor of **Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition**. [READ MORE](#)



**Kyle Camp, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor. [READ MORE](#)



**Erin Jefferson, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Instructor and the inaugural UAMS Women's Mental Health Fellow. [READ MORE](#)



**Laura Rohm, Psy.D.**, has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor. [READ MORE](#)



**Andrew Buchan, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Radiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Interventional Radiology**. [READ MORE](#)

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## RECENT GRANTS



**FIGHTING A DEADLY FUNGUS** | The National Institutes of Health has awarded two grants totaling more than \$3 million to **Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI)** Principal Investigators **Praveen Juvvadi, Ph.D.**, and **William Steinbach, M.D.**, to propel research into a deadly fungus, *Aspergillus fumigatus*. The fungus is a leading cause of death for patients with weakened immune systems. Dr. Juvvadi is an Associate Professor in the Section of **Pediatric Infectious Diseases**. Dr. Steinbach serves in the section and is Professor and Chair of the Department of **Pediatrics**, Associate Dean for Child Health, and Pediatrician-in-Chief for Arkansas Children's. [READ MORE](#)



**BOOSTING MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH** | UAMS, the Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI) and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville are collaborating on a yearlong project to make decades of maternal health research data readily available for future researchers. The project is funded with a \$310,000 supplemental grant from the National Institutes of Health to **Lawrence Cornett, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Professor of **Physiology & Cell Biology** and Director of the **Arkansas IDEa Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE)**. The project will be overseen by **Colin Kay, Ph.D.**, Professor of **Pediatrics** and Director of **Precision Health Research at ACRI**. [READ MORE](#)

*Congratulations to the following College of Medicine team members who were awarded new extramural grants in July. This monthly list, courtesy of the College of Medicine Office of Research, excludes clinical trials and awards under \$10,000, as well as grants highlighted above or previously reported in the COMmunication.*

**Jennifer Guimbellot, M.D., Ph.D.**, Department of **Pediatrics**, ENSuring ACcess to optimal Therapy in CF: ENACT study, NIH/National Institutes of Health, (07/17/2024 – 06/30/2029), \$2,981,633. (ACRI)

**Charles O'Brien, Ph.D.**, Department of **Internal Medicine**, microCT 45 (Admin. Supplement), NIH/Nat. Inst. of General Medical Sciences, (02/01/2024 - 01/31/2025), \$250,000.

**Mohammad Rahman, Ph.D.**, Department of **Biochemistry & Molecular Biology**, R35, NIH/Nat. Inst. of General Medical Sciences, (07/08/2024 – 04/30/2029), \$1,883,350.

**LaTunja Sockwell, M.A.**, Department of **Family & Preventive Medicine**, Ending the HIV Epidemic, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, (07/01/2024 – 05/31/2028), \$820,456.

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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](mailto:COMInternalCommunications@uams.edu).