



WITH *Gratitude*

Dear Colleagues,

The holiday season is upon us, and many are enjoying festivities with colleagues, friends and family. I like to keep in mind the multitude of holidays and traditions observed by our faculty, staff, residents, fellows and students. Maybe your big plans center on Christmas or Hanukkah. Perhaps you will mark the seven principles and feast during Kwanzaa. Some of you celebrated Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, in the fall. And there are many other such holidays commemorated here and around the world.

At the Chancellor's Town Hall in November, I learned that UAMS has a total of 462 international employees from at least 67 countries. More than 70% of these colleagues are in the College of Medicine, including 121 resident and fellow physicians. Because these totals include only those who are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, they only hint at the incredible geographic diversity of the UAMS community. Of course, we are diverse in many other ways as well – and this is one of our greatest strengths.

Many of us are fortunate to have our family with us this time of year. But not everyone is able to go home for the holidays, or to have their loved ones visit them. Likewise, some will be working through the upcoming holidays, caring for our patients or serving in other ways on behalf of our institution. Please know we are thinking about you.

College of Medicine team members, students and trainees have worked hard throughout 2024. I hope you are able to enjoy some quality downtime in the days ahead. And as the year comes to a close, I want to thank you for your service and ongoing commitment to education, research, clinical care and community outreach across Arkansas. Like the holidays that draw us together, *you* are worth celebrating!

Steve

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

Pictured at top with Dr. Webber are third-year medical students Sharon Amole of Little Rock and Reed Allen of Jonesboro

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LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Associate Dean for Finance and Administration



Deanna Stiles, B.A., who has held numerous business leadership positions at UAMS over the past two decades, has been appointed Associate Dean for Finance and Administration in the College of Medicine.

"I was delighted that Deanna accepted this position," said **Steven Webber, MBChB**, Executive Vice Chancellor of UAMS and Dean of the College of Medicine. "She has served in administrative and finance leadership roles for over 23 years and has been integral in the success of multiple major initiatives at UAMS."

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NEW FACULTY

Please join us in welcoming these recent additions to the COM faculty!



Maitri Shah, M.D., has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor.
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Chinmay Bera, MBBS, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor and transplant hepatologist in the Division of **Gastroenterology and Hepatology**.
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Sanjay Muttineni, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hematology/Oncology**.
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Sasya Dronavalli, MBBS, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hospital Medicine**.
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Lindsey Haack, M.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the **Cardiology** Section.
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John Block, M.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the **Emergency Medicine** section.
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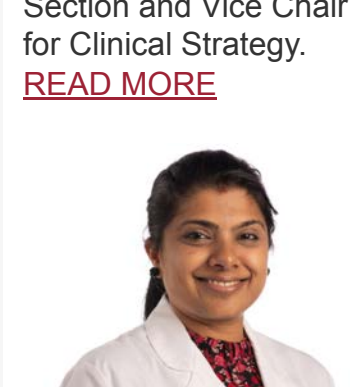
Prateek Wali, M.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as a Professor in the **Gastroenterology** Section and Vice Chair for Clinical Strategy.
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Parker Davidson, M.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the **General Pediatrics** Section.
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Michael Bishop, M.D., M.S., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Associate Professor in the **Hematology/Oncology** Section.
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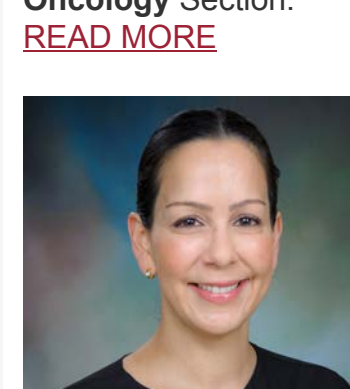
Smitha Vasanna, M.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the **Hematology/Oncology** Section.
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Katherine Tang, M.D., M.S., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the **Pediatric Hospital Medicine** Section.
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Sandra M. Garcia Osogobio, M.D., M.S., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Instructor in the Division of **Colon and Rectal Surgery**.
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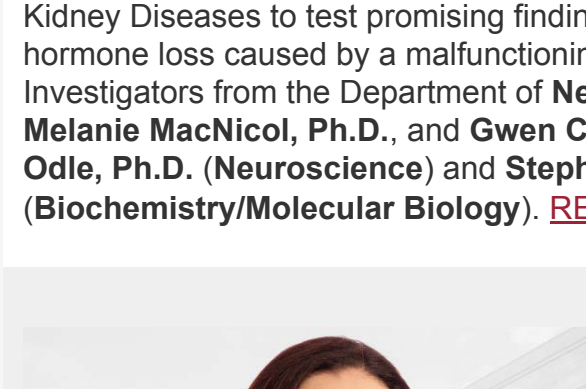
Gili G. Halfteck, M.D., Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Surgical Oncology**.
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RECENT GRANTS



NOVEL PITUITARY GLAND RESEARCH | A UAMS research team has been awarded \$3 million from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases to test promising findings that could lead to better treatments for hormone loss caused by a malfunctioning pituitary gland. Co-Principal Investigators from the Department of **Neuroscience** are **Angus MacNicol, Ph.D.**, **Melanie MacNicol, Ph.D.**, and **Gwen Childs, Ph.D.** Co-investigators are **Angela Odle, Ph.D. (Neuroscience)** and **Stephanie Byrum, Ph.D. (Biochemistry/Molecular Biology)**. [READ MORE](#)



PTSD THERAPIES IN PRISONS | **Melissa Zielinski, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of **Psychiatry** and Director of the Health and the Legal System (HEALS) Lab, has been awarded \$3.3 million from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for a five-year study on the treatment of incarcerated adults with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance use disorder using cognitive processing therapy (CPT). [READ MORE](#)



RUNNING FOR MS RESEARCH | The Department of **Neurology** recently received \$65,000 for multiple sclerosis research from the Remy MS Research Foundation. The grant was relayed to UAMS – literally – by runners and walkers in the third Remy Check Run from Bentonville to Little Rock. [READ MORE](#)

Congratulations also to the following College of Medicine team members who were awarded extramural grants in November. 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.

Andrew Brown, Ph.D., Department of **Biostatistics**, Lumping vs Splitting - Evaluating Approaches Used in Nutrition Research to Categorize Foods and Nutrients in Assessing Nutrition and Health, National Pork Board, (10/01/2024 – 09/30/2025), \$124,500.00. (ACRI)

Lu Dai, M.D., Department of **Pathology**, Development of O'PROTACs-based degraders targeting an oncogenic viral protein, NIH/National Institutes of Health, (11/15/2024 - 10/31/2026), \$415,013.00.

Joseph Sanford, M.D., **UAMS CCIIO/Institute for Digital Health & Innovation**, UAMS eLink CDC/ADH COVID-19 Collaboration, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, (11/05/2024 – 05/31/2025), \$1,995,641.00.

Alexandra Theisen, M.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, The Impact of Skin Disease on Self-Reported Quality of Life and Psychosocial Health in Youth with Cutaneous Lupus Erythematosus, Childhood Arthritis and Rheumatology Research Alliance (CARRA), (07/01/2024 – 06/30/2026), \$49,998.00. (ACRI)

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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.