SPRING 2015 A PUBLICATION OF THE UAMS COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

UAMS
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

College of Health Professions Gains Approval for Dental Residency Program

By Jon Parham

Residency program director Nicki Carter, D.M.D., observes UT dental student Reece Lunsford.

The Center for Dental Education in the UAMS College of Health Professions recently gained accreditation to begin a general practice dental residency program, with the first two resident dentists to begin one-year residencies this summer.

The Center for Dental Education received notice of accreditation in February from the Commission on Dental Accreditation for its post-graduate residency program. Residents will receive 12 months of advanced education, providing dental care under supervision of faculty dentists to patients at UAMS, Arkansas Children's Hospital, the student-led UAMS 12th Street Health and Wellness Center and the Harmony Health Clinic in Little Rock.

Creating the residency program was a goal of the center when it was established in 2012 as a hub for dental education programs at UAMS. The center also operates the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation Oral Health Clinic on the UAMS campus, which provides general dental care.

"With such a high need for oral health care in Arkansas, we are pleased to move forward with a residency program that will expand the availability of dental care to more patients while giving recent dental graduates important and broad educational opportunities," said William Slagle, D.D.S., director of the Center for Dental Education.

Two dental residents will be selected to begin the program in July. The program will expand to six resident dentists after the first year.

Niki Carter, D.M.D., associate professor in the Center for Dental Education and residency program director, completed a residency herself after graduating from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry in 1988. The Arkansas native served a one-year residency at University of Louisville School of Dentistry Humana Hospital before returning to Arkansas to begin her dental practice.

"Completing a residency assists new dentists in the transition from academics to real world dentistry," Carter said. "The education opportunities for dental residents at UAMS are multifaceted: dentists provide treatment of commonly encountered oral health conditions as well as preventive care in our oral health clinic. Clinic dentists also have hospital privileges and are available to provide consultations for UAMS inpatients as requested by physicians."

In the UAMS clinic, dental residents will join clinic staff that includes faculty dentists, registered dental hygienists and registered dental assistants. In addition, the clinic hosts an externship for senior dental students from the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry for two-week clinic rotations.

The dental externship program began in early 2014 and was recently expanded thanks to a grant from the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas. Now as many as 90 dental students will visit UAMS between fall 2014-fall 2015, working in the clinic, at Arkansas Children's Hospital and the 12th Street Health and Wellness Center.

College of Health Professions
Spring 2015 Newsletter

The UAMS College of Health Professions Mission

The mission of the UAMS College of Health Professions is to improve the health of culturally diverse populations by:

- Offering education, research and service opportunities for students in the allied health professions
- Providing students with a total educational experience that emphasizes life-long learning
- Collaborating with other health care professionals to be an innovator in allied health education

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A Message from the Dean

The winter weather that affected Arkansas through February and early March caused missed school days and derailed activities, events and even newsletter deadlines. More importantly, the ice and snow made for hazardous driving conditions and Arkansans were regularly advised — when the weather was at its worst — to stay off the roads unless they absolutely had to be out.

Even while schools and colleges like ours closed during inclement weather, hospitals and many other health care facilities never closed. Ambulances and the paramedics who operate them were always on duty. I hear of hospital workers who slept at work so they would not miss their shift due to icy roads.

I admire and appreciate their dedication and I know that it was not just physicians and nurses who were caring for patients regardless of the winter weather or travel conditions. It included many professionals and graduates of our college: paramedics, laboratory scientists, radiologic technologists, respiratory therapists and many more.

With winter finally (hopefully) turning to spring, 2015 has already been a busy year for the College of Health Professions. This newsletter offers updates on the progress of some of our new and growing programs.

Our general dental residency program has been accredited. The physical therapy program in northwest Arkansas is preparing for an accreditation site visit and to welcome its first students. Faculty in all of our programs are actively working to expand opportunities for our students or seeking to generate new scientific knowledge through grant-funded research. They are delivering on our college mission of preparing students for careers in the health professions as well as public health education.

Thank you for your support and continued interest in our college.

Douglas L. Murphy, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Health Professions

Physical Therapy Skills Lab Named for Foundation

PT Program Prepares for First Students

By Jon Parham

(From left) John Jefferson, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Physical Therapy, Lance Taylor and Gilda Underwood of the Schmieding Foundation and Peter Kohler, M.D., vice chancellor for UAMS' northwest Arkansas campus

The UAMS Northwest regional campus in Fayetteville recently unveiled a name for a new teaching lab critical to its coming physical therapy program — the Schmieding Neurological Skills Lab.

The name is in celebration of the foundation's $100,000 pledge toward the physical therapy three-year doctoral program, which will welcome its first class of 24 students in August. The Schmieding Neurological Skills Lab will be used to teach physical therapy students skills for evaluating and treating those with neurological disorders including developmental disorders, spinal cord injuries, stroke and conditions such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

The physical therapy program, part of the UAMS College of Health Professions, is the first UAMS program housed solely on the Fayetteville campus. The lab, which is nearing completion, is one of five teaching labs to be used by the program. Program resources also include the recently opened Northwest Outpatient Therapy Clinic on campus where students will gain therapy experience with patients under supervision of faculty and clinic staff.

"The Schmieding Neurological Skills Lab is a critical component in creating an academic program that will expand opportunities for careers in physical therapy in Arkansas and increase access to comprehensive rehabilitation therapy in the region," said Peter Kohler, M.D., vice chancellor for UAMS' northwest Arkansas campus. "We are grateful for the strong support shown us by the Schmieding Foundation and others who have helped us assemble the resources needed to establish our physical therapy program."

The Springdale-based Schmieding Foundation has been a strong supporter and partner with UAMS. In 1998, the Schmieding Foundation donated $15 million to UAMS to establish and construct the UAMS Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education in Springdale. A 2009 gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation to the Arkansas Aging Initiative of UAMS allowed expansion of the successful Schmieding Home Caregiver Training Program in Little Rock and seven sites around the state.

"Access to comprehensive rehabilitation services is a way to help aging Arkansans extend health and quality of life, so we are proud to support UAMS Northwest in its efforts to build a high-quality physical therapy program here," said Gilda Underwood, president of The Schmieding Foundation.

John Jefferson, Ph.D., chair and associate professor for the Department of Physical Therapy in the College of Health Professions, said the skills lab will include the latest neurological rehabilitation equipment for assessment and treatment of patients of all ages.

"When completed, this lab will be equipped to practice neurological rehabilitation across the lifespan — from newborn to the elderly," Jefferson said. "It is supported by adjacent physical therapy research labs and our comprehensive rehabilitation therapy clinic.

The other teaching labs will focus on orthopedic, cardiovascular and other conditions that require physical therapy.

GIVING Donor Profiles

A regular newsletter feature, profiling supporters of the College of Health Professions and why they chose to give to the college.
By Lee Hogan

Nickita James

Alumni Donor

Recent alumna Nickita James hopes her gift to the College of Health Professions General Scholarship Fund will help future students the way it helped her.

A single mom of two children, James had quit her full-time job to go back to school at UAMS. It was the several scholarships she received while attending school that helped her through to graduate, and now she hopes she can play a part in helping students now.

"I know a lot of kids drop out because of the financial burden," she said. "They think they can swing it and then they can't."

James, whose son is now 16 and daughter is now 7, graduated last year. She lives in Texarkana and works at two hospitals, St. Michaels in Texarkana and Willis Knighton in Shreveport, La. She still has aspirations of coming back to UAMS, the next time as a teacher.

"I know how it feels to be the student, and I know how it feels to struggle through," James said. "I think I have advice and learning to offer. Also, I feel like I would learn more by teaching than just doing the work myself."

Douglas Murphy, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Health Professions

As dean of the College of Health Professions, Douglas Murphy, Ph.D., understands not all UAMS students come from affluent backgrounds.

Murphy was a first-generation college graduate and depended on jobs to navigate his way to a diploma. For that reason, he's sympathetic toward incoming students who also depend on scholarships to help out, and has always enjoyed giving to the college's various student scholarships.

"We have a lot of students who don't come here with a lot of money," Murphy said. "That's why student scholarships are so important. The more support we can give them, the more successful they will be."

Student scholarships are not all Murphy has a soft spot for, as he also regularly gives donations to bolster UAMS' art collection around campus, especially in the buildings occupied by college departments. As an art education major in college, Murphy knows the impact good art can have on the attitude of people, both staff and students.

Shelli Pike

Alumni Donor

Having known late faculty member Joseph Bittengle as a student and colleague, Shelli Pike suggested when the United Society of Radiologic Technologists recently closed that the non-profit donate its remaining funds toward the Joseph R. Bittengle Memorial Endowed Scholarship.

Bittengle worked at UAMS for 16 years before his 2008 death and served as division director for the Radiologic Imaging Sciences Program in the Department of Imaging and Radiation Sciences of the UAMS College of Health Professions.

"Mr. Bittengle was dedicated to UAMS and worked diligently to ensure the imaging science programs were successful," said Pike, who worked 11 years for UAMS Southwest in Texarkana and was serving as the non-profit's vice president when it decided to disband. "My hope is those students receiving these scholarships are just as dedicated to the art of radiologic technology and all it entails throughout their education and career."

GIVING Our Donors

The faculty, staff and students of the College of Health Professions would like to say "thank you" to these generous donors who made gifts to the college from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2014.

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Genetic Counseling Receives Grant for Rare Disorder Conference

The college's Department of Genetic Counseling will host an international conference at UAMS this summer on the rare genetic disorder Arterial Tortuosity Syndrome (ATS).

ATS is a connective-tissue disorder that causes a twisting and elongation of arteries and vessels, which leads to cardiac problems. There have only been around 100 diagnoses of the syndrome worldwide.

Tiffany Lepard, a principal investigator and UAMS genetic counselor, said this conference will allow patients and their families, who chronicle their experiences in a Facebook group for ATS patients, to meet face to face and start a dialogue to learn more about the syndrome.

Lepard became interested in ATS after diagnosing a patient in Arkansas with the syndrome and realizing the lack of information available. She is now conducting a five-year study on ATS patients to raise the level knowledge about the condition.

The local patient's mother formed a non-profit organization, A Twist of Fate, to raise awareness and find a cure. Lepard is a member of the group's board of directors.

The organization was awarded a $54,000 grant from Chive Charities to fund the conference, which will be attended by doctors and several patients from around the world.

Health Information Program Ranked Among Best

The Health Information Management program in the College of Health Professions was recently ranked by TheBestSchools.org as having one of the nation's best online associate degree programs.

TheBestSchools.org is an independent organization that ranks colleges throughout the country and makes school recommendations. The rankings for health information technology degrees were based on quality of the program and range of courses, in addition to school awards, rankings and reputation.

UAMS surpassed various schools around the country for the top honor, including Idaho State University, Weber State University and the University of Northwestern Ohio.

Kathy Trawick, Ed.D., said the entire staff was extremely honored to be recognized.

"It made the department feel like our hard work had paid off," Trawick said. "We were proud to be recognized and felt like the fruits of our labor had been noticed."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, health information management occupations are expected to grow 22 percent between 2012 and 2022, which is double the growth expected for all occupations. UAMS' health information management program averages about 50 students a year for its associate degree. It is also in the accreditation process for a bachelor's degree program.

Graduates of the program enjoy more than 120 career choices, including auditor, data analyst, coder and HIPAA officer.

Faculty Member Works to Improve Women's Health in China

Don Simpson

The College of Health Professions' Department of Laboratory Sciences and UAMS Office of Global Health hope to improve women's health in China by introducing a cancer-detecting technique widely used in the United States.

Don Simpson, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Laboratory Sciences and director of the Office of Global Health, is working with Chinese pathologist X.R. Sun, M.D., to improve the sensitivity of pap smear tests for detecting cervical cancer. The two want to incorporate morphology — or the study of the form or shape of an organism — a practice not widely used in China.

This would provide better screenings for Chinese women to detect abnormalities sooner. Since the technique is not extensively used in China, training is part of the process.

"This is the kind of stuff that shouldn't be bottled up," Simpson said. "The education, the knowledge to do this work, shouldn't remain exclusive with one place or the other."

A group from China will soon come to UAMS to iron out details of the program. Simpson said there are also talks of forming an advisory board of Chinese-American physicians in pathology to provide oversight and translation.

Following a training session, the program is hoped to be functional by the summer, Simpson said, with hopes for a long-term partnership with UAMS in the future.

College Names Three to Advisory Board

The College of Health Professions has appointed three new members to its advisory board.

The board is charged with assisting the college in raising its stature in the communities it serves, advocacy and fundraising. Members of the board include alumni, UAMS faculty and leaders in health care, business and higher education.

The new board members are:

Chad Avery – Avery is general counsel for Heifer International. Previously, he was a shareholder and director at Gill Ragon Owen Law Firm. He has served with the Peace Corps Volunteers in Uzbeistan, and is a member of the American Bar Association and the FBI Citizen Academy Alumni Association.

Deborah French — French is the vice president for commercial lending at Centennial Bank. She has served on the North Little Rock Chamber Board as executive board and charitable committee chair since 2012. French served on the Museum of Discovery Board as executive board and finance chair from 2008-2014.

Patrick Skinner — Director of Physical Medicine at Mercy Hospital in Rogers who also serves on the advisory board for the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at UAMS Northwest. Skinner said he is enthusiastic about the college's efforts to establish the physical therapy program in northwest Arkansas.

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College Unveils New Artwork, Furnishings

The lobby in the Administration West Building, which houses the college's administration offices and is the "gateway" to the college's campus home, recently got a makeover with new carpet and furnishings. The new furniture harmonizes with the mid-century modern style of the 1960s-era building. The final touch is a new major artwork by Tarrence Corbin, a gift from a generous donor, that now adorns both walls of the lobby.

We Want to Hear from You!

Do you have a personal story about the college that you'd like to share? Contact us at (501) 686-5730 or by email at DeanCHP@uams.edu to share stories or recent accomplishments with us.

Get our newsletter via email and help us "go green" by providing your email address to DAA_Updates@uams.edu.

The UAMS College of Health Professions newsletter is published twice a year by the College of Health Professions Office of the Dean.

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