

THE TRIBUNE UAMS University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

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Green Light

Accelerating Discovery Aided by New NCATS Award



TRI Director Laura James, M.D., talks to researchers at the recent TRI Open House.

The UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI) has received funding for a Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) totaling \$3,497,558 through Aug. 31, 2018.

The 11 months of bridge funding comes from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

“We are very excited and proud to receive this award so that we can expand translational research at UAMS and improve the health of Arkansans through collaboration with our partner institutions – the Arkansas Children’s Research Institute and the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System,” said TRI Director Laura James, M.D., UAMS associate vice chancellor for clinical and translational research.

TRI will apply for five years of CTSA funding in May 2018. If the May application is fully funded, the

award would likely total more than \$25 million. The first CTSA grant was awarded to UAMS in 2009.

James, also principal investigator for the award, said the CTSA ensures that UAMS remains a member of the national CTSA consortium, made up of 62 academic research institutions across the country.

As a CTSA-funded site, UAMS directly helps researchers overcome long-standing obstacles to their work and provides patients opportunities to participate in cutting-edge clinical trials. In addition, UAMS will continue to harness extremely large data sets, in concert with other institutions, to develop state-of-the-art solutions to health challenges.

“TRI has been a significant contributor to the CTSA consortium in helping it meet its goals,” said Lawrence Cornett, Ph.D., UAMS vice chancellor for research. “This award ensures that

Message from Dr. James



Dear Colleagues,
This fall brought very exciting news to TRI and our UAMS research community. The recently announced Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) will greatly benefit

our continued efforts on behalf of UAMS researchers and the state as a whole.

Thanks to UAMS’ institutional commitment to TRI, we’ve continued in recent years to implement innovative new programs and improve existing programs. TRI is on a mission to make a difference for our research enterprise, as evidenced by major enhancements to the Arkansas Clinical Data Repository, new collaboration opportunities through UAMS Profiles, expansion of participant recruitment opportunities through ARresearch.org, and our efficient online research services request portal.

The new award will support a new informatics research consultation service, a new research participant recruitment program, and additional biostatistics services. The grant will also support dissemination services so that study findings of UAMS researchers are broadly shared with many diverse audiences.

An important aspect of the award is that it maintains our status as a member of the CTSA Consortium. The grant also provides resources that allow us to continue expanding our valuable partnerships with the Arkansas Children’s Research Institute and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System.

We look forward to working with you as we develop our application for a full five years of funding in May!

Sincerely,

Laura James, M.D.

TRI Director

UAMS Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical and Translational Research

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UAMS clinical and translational investigators have ready access to diverse resources and approaches that TRI provides.”

In the last three years, TRI has launched or improved several of its research resources for investigators, such as:

- ARresearch.org, a volunteer research participant registry and website, was established in collaboration with the community so that researchers have access to a pool of over 3,600 individuals interested in hearing more about research volunteer opportunities.
- Arkansas Clinical Data Repository, a research data warehouse with de-identified patient data that researchers can use to understand patterns in data that will provide a framework to guide future studies testing new treatments or approaches.
- UAMS Profiles, an online researcher-to-researcher networking/collaboration tool, which gives researchers a user-friendly way to locate potential research partners locally and nationally.
- TRI Portal, a cost-saving electronic request system for researchers, which allows the researcher to select from a menu of over 30 unique services and receive customized help with a research-related task in an efficient manner.

The CTSA also supports TRI’s partnership with the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health to provide a robust Community Engagement program to increase public involvement in research at UAMS. Two key components of the program are:

- TRI’s Community Advisory Board, represented by diverse grassroots segments of the state’s population. The board provides critical viewpoints, including cultural and logistical perspectives that researchers need to make their studies operational.
- TRI’s Community Scientist Academy, which teaches the public how research is conducted and provides readiness training so that community members can serve as consultants to researchers and help plan the design and tools used in their research.

The new CTSA will also support a new informatics research consultation service, a new research participant recruitment program, and statistical services to ensure studies are properly designed to answer research questions. TRI will also use the grant for dissemination services so that the findings of research studies are communicated to numerous audiences, including research participants, the local community, other researchers, treating physicians and national audiences.

The NCATS/NIH award is under Award Number U54TR001629.

TRI Names Four New KL2 Scholars

Four early career researchers were recently selected to receive KL2 Mentored Research Career Development Scholar Awards.

This year’s awards are supported by UAMS institutional funds provided to TRI and funding from Arkansas Children’s Research Institute and the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute.

Fifteen KL2 Scholar applications were reviewed by a Study Section comprised of internal and external reviewers. Five finalists were interviewed by senior members of the panel.

The scholars, all from the College of Medicine, are:



Lisa Brents, Ph.D., instructor, Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology
KL2 project: The Metabolic and Pharmacodynamic Profile of Deuterated Buprenorphine



Sufna John, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry/Psychology
KL2 project: Improving Outcomes for Young Children with Behavior Disorders: A Coordinated Care Model



Rosemary Nabaweesei, Dr.P.H., M.B.Ch.B., M.P.H., assistant professor, Department of Pediatrics, Center for Applied Research and Evaluation CARE
KL2 project: Developing Safe Sleep Interventions for Rural Underserved Communities



Carolina Schinke, M.D., assistant professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Myeloma Institute
KL2 project: The Role of PI-IF 19 as a Promoter of Tumorigenicity and Therapeutic Target in Multiple Myeloma

The KL2 Scholar program provides two years of research training to junior faculty. It provides 75 percent salary support and up to \$25,000 per year for research, tuition, travel and education.

TRIBUTARY

TRI Community Board Has Hand in Cancer Genetic Counseling Grant



Kristin Zorn, M.D., with her team working to implement UAMS' cancer genetics telehealth program, Joshua Acuna, research associate (left), and Mindy Simonson, genetics counselor.

A recent grant of more than \$55,000 to UAMS will help Arkansas health care providers identify and treat families with an inherited risk for cancer.

Awarded to Kristin Zorn, M.D., the one-year, \$55,554 grant from the Arkansas Cancer Coalition (ACC) will help genetics specialists at UAMS leverage the state's extensive telehealth network to train health care providers about inherited cancer syndromes and their contribution to cancer risk.

Zorn, director of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology in the College of Medicine, credits the successful application to the community review board established by the Translational Research Institute Community Engagement Core.

One-time community review boards assist specific research projects that require community participation. The service is provided at no cost to researchers.

"The Community Review Board was critical to developing the background data we needed," Zorn said. "It provided great feedback on the feasibility of the project and helped improve my understanding of the community."

Using telehealth, the program will first educate local health care providers about Lynch syndrome, an inherited disorder that increases the risk of colon, endometrial and several other types of cancer. The program will then implement guidelines that local providers can use to evaluate colon and endometrial cancer patients for the syndrome. UAMS genetic specialists will guide the providers through the screening process and help identify and counsel patients with Lynch syndrome about strategies for managing their cancer risk.

"By identifying families who have Lynch syndrome, we can help them make informed decisions about options to prevent or detect early-stage cancer," Zorn said.

TRI & me



Michael Bailey, Research Program Manager, Translational Research Institute

"I came to the UAMS Translational Research Institute four years ago after working 25 years for a pharmaceutical industry-related contract research organization. I was pleased to enter a new environment where my skill set was not only appreciated, but put to immediate use. An empathetic management staff

has helped renew my professional interests and allowed me to grow in my position within TRI. I am also fortunate to work with both researchers and the community, allowing me to meet and provide services to a wide variety of people. It is immensely gratifying to make new friends almost every day, thanks to my position at TRI."

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TRIBUTES

The following UAMS researchers cited the Translational Research Institute (TRI) in publications after utilizing TRI resources or funding:

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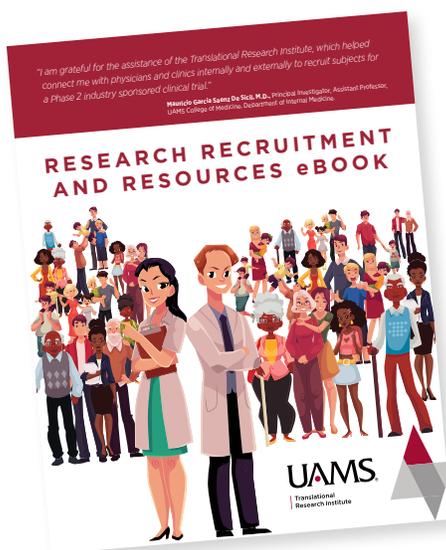
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Shah A, Hayes CJ and Martin BC. "Factors Influencing Long-Term Opioid Use among Opioid Naive Patients: An Examination of Initial Prescription Characteristics and Pain Etiologies." *J Pain* 2017 Jul 13.

Thank you for remembering to cite TRI in your publications resulting from studies that receive TRI support.

TRI Releases First eBook for Researchers!



TRI has released its first online guide for researchers: **Research Recruitment and Resources eBook**.

The 22-page web-based booklet was designed to give researchers an easy guide to resources to facilitate their work. Participant recruitment and other critical research services are covered, with links throughout to additional information and contacts in each area.

Find it online at TRI.uams.edu.