

# THE **TRi**bune **UAMS**

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

ACCELERATING DISCOVERIES TOWARD BETTER HEALTH

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## New in Clinical Trials

### TRI Leads Advances with Trials Today, TriNetX and ClinCard



*TRI matched UAMS' Manisha Singh, M.D., with her first industry sponsored clinical trial by leveraging its affiliation with a global health research network, TriNetX. Singh, right, is assisted in her chronic kidney disease study by Anja Rassman, R.N., TRI clinical nurse coordinator.*

This fall, UAMS became just the second Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) site to offer a new web-based service where the public can search for clinical trials and contact study coordinators to learn more.

Called UAMS Trials Today ([UAMS.trialstoday.org](http://UAMS.trialstoday.org)), the new trial searching site is linked with the national Trials Today website recently established at Vanderbilt University.

The Trials Today initiative is one of several new ways that the Translational Research Institute (TRI) is working to address key clinical trials issues. Others include increasing the number of clinical trials through the global health network TriNetX, and the introduction of ClinCard to streamline participant compensation.

Trials Today is a new, more user-friendly public interface with the NIH [ClinicalTrials.gov](http://ClinicalTrials.gov). UAMS Trials Today is now the primary trials search feature on the UAMS Health website.

Pursuit of the upgrade was approved by TRI and other UAMS research leaders soon after Vanderbilt finished work on the main site. UAMS IT Research, directed by Angie Smith, M.S., then worked quickly with Vanderbilt to establish the local interface.

"When potential participants are looking for clinical trials, they can quickly find studies being conducted in their geographical area," Smith said.

Smith noted that Trials Today is a different recruitment approach from the [ARresearch.org](http://ARresearch.org) registry, where potential participants choose their study/health interest areas, then wait to be contacted by research staff.

"The person searching Trials Today can contact the study staff immediately versus waiting on study staff to contact them," she said.

*Continued on page 2*

## Message from Dr. James



Dear Colleagues,  
As TRI looks ahead to 2018, we are excited about accomplishments of the last year and opportunities to expand support for researchers to improve the health of Arkansans.

We learned in September that UAMS would receive a bridge award from the NIH National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). This award enables UAMS to further develop collaborative research programs and apply for a five-year award in May, 2018.

This issue of the TRiBune reports important advances in clinical trials that will help increase participation, including:

- Launch of Trials Today, an improved clinical trials search tool for the public. UAMS is the second program in the U.S. to go live with this CTSA initiative.
- Continued participation with TriNetX has led to the placement of three new clinical trials at UAMS in the last year.

In November, our pilot study awardees (see Page 2) were selected by a study section that included community members. New this year, applicants produced a video of themselves explaining their project in plain language. This approach has already caught the interest of other CTSA sites wanting new approaches to engage with the community on research initiatives.

As we enter 2018, we look forward to working with the academic and local communities to conduct research that improves the health of Arkansans.

Sincerely,

Laura James, M.D.  
Director, UAMS Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical and Translational Research

## New in Clinical Trials (Continued from page 1)

The UAMS clinical trials listed in Trials Today are pulled from CLARA and Events Tracker, which is part of UAMS' clinical trials management system, AR-CRIS. Only studies that are open and actively enrolling are included.

### Industry Sponsored Trials

TRI is bringing new trials to UAMS by taking advantage of match-making opportunities from industry sponsors looking for UAMS principal investigators. In its 15-month-old affiliation with TriNetX, a global health research network, UAMS has received 60 inquiries about industry-sponsored clinical trial opportunities. UAMS faculty are now pursuing clinical trials in end-stage renal disease, rhinosinusitis, chronic kidney disease, migraines, Fabry disease, esophagitis and women's health. So far, three studies have been awarded.

"Clinical trials are an important component of the UAMS research portfolio," said TRI Director Laura James, M.D. "We want to grow capacity and depth in all kinds of research on the UAMS campus."

An added benefit is that TRI staff provide assistance to faculty who are new to clinical trials leadership. TRI staff help assess feasibility of conducting the study, budget development and negotiation, IRB submissions, and study initiation. Clinical research coordinators partner with faculty members to ensure that clinical trials are optimally managed throughout the conduct of the trial.

Manish Singh, M.D., is embarking on her first industry sponsored trial investigating the effect of intravenous iodinated contrast on kidney function in adults with chronic kidney disease.

"I am very excited to begin this study, and I am grateful for the expert assistance from TRI," said Singh, assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine.

### ClinCard

In November, TRI introduced ClinCard, a more efficient research participant compensation method. ClinCard was pursued by TRI as another way to help clinical trials run more professionally and ensure that our research participants are treated fairly, said TRI Executive Director Amy Jo Jenkins, M.S.

ClinCard is a MasterCard that can be used at any retail location or as an ATM card at any bank. ClinCard is an option in the existing petty cash account workflow in which payments are loaded onto the cards in real-time instead of being issued as checks or gift cards, which can often take weeks or months to be processed. Other research participant reimbursements, such as airfare, hotel and mileage, can also be issued using ClinCard after approval by the Procurement Office within the electronic system.

"It's important that processing of research subject payments occurs in a timely manner," Jenkins said. "This is part of our commitment as a CTSA site to conduct clinical trials safely, efficiently, and with the highest level of quality. Efficient processing of study-related payments ensures that subjects will stay in clinical trials and help us answer important health-related questions."

ClinCards are now being used at TRI, the Cancer Institute, Jones Eye Institute and the Myeloma Institute.

Researchers may contact Jenkins at [ajjenkins@uams.edu](mailto:ajjenkins@uams.edu) to see if ClinCards are feasible for them.

## Four Receive TRI Pilot Awards

TRI recently approved research pilot study awards for four UAMS researchers totaling \$200,000.

It is the first year that the annual awards of up to \$50,000 each have been applied to pilot projects focused on implementation science. Implementation science is the study of methods to promote integrating research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice to improve the quality and effectiveness of health services.

Awardees were selected by a study section of internal, external and community reviewers. **The pilot awardees are:**

- **Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., MBA**, assistant professor, internal medicine, College of Medicine; associate vice chancellor, Northwest Arkansas Campus; director, Office of Community Health and Research, co-director of the Center for Pacific Islander Health

**Pilot project:** Implementation of Family Model DSME in an Underserved Marshallese Population in a Clinical Setting

- **Benjamin Teeter, Ph.D.**, assistant professor, pharmacy practice, College of Pharmacy, Center for Implementation Research

**Pilot project:** Testing Implementation Strategies to Support Community Pharmacist-Initiated Prescription and Distribution of Naloxone to Reduce Overdose by Opioids

- **Jeremy Thomas, Pharm.D.**, associate professor, pharmacy practice, College of Pharmacy

**Pilot project:** Implementation of Clinical Pharmacy Services Delivered via Telehealth to Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers

- **Kristin Zorn, M.D.**, associate professor, gynecology and genetics, College of Medicine

**Pilot project:** An Implementation Strategy to Increase Appropriate Referrals for Genetic Counseling and Testing Among Patients at High Risk for Hereditary Cancer Syndromes

# TRIBUTARY

## TRI Is Catalyst for Research Growth, National Award at NW Campus

TRI's support of research at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus dates to 2013 and can be credited with helping spark its extraordinary research growth, said Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., MBA, associate vice chancellor for the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus.

Research at the Northwest Regional Campus is devoted entirely to community based approaches for interventions with underrepresented populations, especially its Hispanic and Marshallese communities. It has used TRI pilot study funding and support from TRI's strong community engagement core as catalysts for major awards from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

In addition to its grant success, the campus recently won a national award for its work with the North Street Clinic, an interprofessional, student-led clinic managed by students from the UAMS colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy. The clinic is also a setting for community-based participatory research with the Marshallese. Faculty and students have published more than 30 articles on their work since the clinic opened in 2014.

Much of the research that occurs in the clinic has been supported by TRI, including pilot funding and biostatistics support for interprofessional education faculty articles and posters.



Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., (center) with UAMS community health workers Terry Takamaru and Sammie Mamis.

This fall, the campus received the Star Award of Community Achievement from the Association of American Medical Colleges Group on Regional Medical Campuses.

"I am thrilled that because of TRI support, we've been able to integrate community engagement practices and support several pilot research projects in the clinic, and that was a key component of receiving the award," said McElfish, also director of the campus' Office of Community Health and Research.

A new TRI pilot award (story, Page 2) will soon help McElfish implement a family model diabetes self-management education (DSME) program with the Marshallese in a clinical setting.

# TRI & me



Geoffrey Curran, Ph.D.,  
Director, UAMS Center for  
Implementation Research,  
Professor, Pharmacy Practice,  
College of Pharmacy, and  
Psychiatry, College of Medicine

"While implementation research has been a focus of mine for more than 15 years, until recently this

realm of study hasn't received a lot of attention. Thanks to support from the Translational Research Institute, more UAMS researchers are developing and testing implementation strategies in real-world settings. I was thrilled that

TRI chose implementation science as the focus for its recent Pilot Awards, and I am equally

enthusiastic about the caliber of awardees and their projects. TRI is helping UAMS find new approaches to some of research's most vexing challenges, and I am proud to play a role."

The *TRIBune* is produced by the UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI).

**Website**

**TRI.uams.edu**

**Email: TRI@uams.edu**

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**Editor**

David Robinson

**Designer**

Leslie Norris

**TRI Director**

Laura James, M.D.

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**The following UAMS researchers cited the Translational Research Institute (TRI)  
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