

## Productive Partnership

### TRI Helps Center for Health Literacy Make National Impact



*Kristie Hadden, Ph.D., and Laura James, M.D., look over a plain-language informed consent template.*

Kristie Hadden, Ph.D., and her team at the Center for Health Literacy have been busy collecting national and international awards, grants and attention for their research-based tools and interventions. And for good reason - their products are becoming models for addressing a key barrier to health improvement and human subjects research.

Hadden attributes much of the center's success to support from the UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI), which began in 2013 with co-sponsorship of the Health Literacy Research Grand Rounds.

"The grand rounds really got the ball rolling," Hadden said.

She invited luminaries in the health literacy field from across the country. Two of the researchers became Hadden's collaborators on a \$2.9 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant. The five-year grant is testing a diabetes education and health literacy program in patient-centered medical homes at UAMS Regional Centers across Arkansas.

"If TRI hadn't made the lecture series possible, I don't believe I would have been able to establish those relationships so early in my research career," she said.

TRI Director Laura James, M.D., said it is exciting to see the Center for Health Literacy using innovative translational research approaches to tackle such a significant barrier to health improvement.

## Message from Dr. James



Dear Colleagues,  
Our goal at the Translational Research Institute (TRI) is to help you more effectively translate new knowledge and discoveries into everyday practice. This

means addressing barriers that impede your research goals, such as finding collaborators, meeting study accrual targets, and implementing findings.

A primary barrier to health improvement and human subjects research is low health literacy.

We are fortunate at UAMS to have the Center for Health Literacy, which is developing evidence-based tools helpful to patients, doctors and researchers (see adjacent story). Under Dr. Kristie Hadden's leadership, the center is using research to validate and improve those tools. Dr. Hadden previously worked with the UAMS IRB to develop a plain-language informed consent template for investigator-initiated research. Many UAMS researchers have adopted this template, which lowers reading levels to appropriate levels of comprehension.

The next step is to test the impact of the template on clinical trial endpoints, such as research participant satisfaction, enrollment and retention. TRI recently helped Dr. Hadden develop a grant application to the CTSA Program that will nest the template within a \$19.3 million multi-site study being led by the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

This partnership is emblematic of so many that we have at UAMS, and I am proud that TRI can play a role.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura James, M.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

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

## Productive Partnership (Continued from page 1)

“In a relatively short time, Dr. Hadden and her team have produced strategic evidence-based interventions that will move the needle for health improvement and have an impact on human subjects research by making complex documents easier for research participants to understand,” said James, UAMS associate vice chancellor for clinical and translational research.

**Made UAMS home to the largest known set of patient health literacy screening data in the U.S.** This feat stems from piloting a health literacy screening question in the UAMS electronic health record Epic. In October 2017, the pilot results earned Best Poster from more than 200 entries at the International Conference on Communication in Healthcare/Health Literacy Annual Research Conference. Hadden, in collaboration with UAMS’ Fred Prior, Ph.D., and Ahmad Baghal, M.D., also submitted a manuscript about the screening to the Journal of the International Medical Informatics Association.

“We have a lot of momentum behind this screening,” Hadden said. “It’s pretty exciting - more than 100,000 patients have been screened and we have yet to implement it across the entire clinical enterprise.”

The resulting data could be used in an array of population health studies, she said.

**Established the largest known collaborative of health literacy researchers in the U.S.** The Center for Health Literacy Affiliate Faculty Group includes about 30 faculty from UAMS and across the U.S. committed to collaborative health literacy research. Since it was created in 2017, the multidisciplinary group has produced more than 20 publications.

“We’re a very productive group,” Hadden said. “I don’t know of another group like it out there.”

**Shared the center’s plain-language informed consent template nationally via IRB Advisors Inc.** The template created by the center in 2016 dropped mean readability of UAMS informed consents to an 8th grade level. Already available to UAMS researchers, IRB Advisors, an online medium, recently asked to share the template with its national audience.

“We’re hoping it will be widely used by investigators across the U.S.,” Hadden said.

**Recently applied for a NIH grant to further study the plain-language informed consent template’s impact.** The next step for the template is to compare it to traditional informed consent approaches in a large, multicenter clinical

trial. Hadden leveraged a special grant opportunity available to Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program sites to develop a partnership with the CTSA at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The informed consent study will be nested within a \$19.3 million multi-site study examining the effects of pharmacotherapy for mild hypertension in pregnancy among 4,700 to 5,700 patients.

In just the last year, the Center for Health Literacy has:

**Researched a Spanish-language health literacy screening tool.** Validated screening questions were adapted and tested using a 2017 TRI Pilot Award. Hadden said she is close to releasing study results.

If funded, the study will determine whether the plain-language template improves comprehension for participants; whether subjects are more or less likely to enroll; and if they are more or less likely to stay in a study.

**Joined national health literacy policy leadership.** Chris Trudeau, J.D., a Center for Health Literacy faculty member, was appointed to the Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Science Roundtable on Health Literacy, which meets quarterly in Washington, D.C. “It’s an incredible honor to be at the table with such high-level leadership,” Hadden said.

**Developed a new set of patient opioid education tools.** As part of a targeted intervention for orthopaedic surgery patients at UAMS, the tools are being shared across UAMS, with other health systems, and with national medical associations and societies.

They can be found at [healthliteracy.uams.edu](http://healthliteracy.uams.edu).

**Won a national award for Spanish-language tool.** The center received the ClearMark Award of Distinction from the Center for Plain Language for How to Talk to Your Doctor HANdbook – Spanish. The center also received the Spanish Grand ClearMark Award, the highest honor for all 2017 Spanish nominations.

# TRIBUTARY

## TRI's Use of Community Reviewers Draws Wide Interest



UAMS' Kate Stewart, M.D., M.P.H., TRI Community Engagement director, leads a Community Scientist Academy class.

Already recognized for its community engagement innovations, the Translational Research Institute (TRI) is receiving attention from across the U.S. for its use of external (community) reviewers.

TRI has used community reviewers as members of its Pilot Award Program Study Sections since 2016. Others took notice during the most recent study section, attended by a member of the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program External Reviewer Exchange Consortium, said TRI's Nia Indelicato, program manager for the Pilot Award Program.

"She was impressed with our community reviewers and mentioned it to the group on a scheduled call," Indelicato

said. "This led to me sharing with the group what we do. One or two expressed more interest in what we do and asked us about our materials, etc. That morphed into TRI's decision to more broadly disseminate our methods for incorporating community reviewers into the pilot review process."

Those interested in learning more include Harvard Medical School, Medical School of Wisconsin, Ohio State University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of California-Irvine, University of Southern California, University of Washington, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Donald Mock, M.D., Ph.D., who directs TRI's pilot program, said the community reviewers have brought a long-missing component to the study sections.

"They provide an important perspective we've never had before," said Mock, a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, as well as pediatrics. "It's gratifying for our team to be at the forefront of such an innovative approach to grant reviews."

TRI has built a strong, diverse network of community partners over the last nine years. The addition of the Community Scientist Academy in 2016 has added to the cadre of citizens eager to learn about clinical and translational research so they can offer feedback on how the research can best impact their communities.

# TRI & me



Amy Jo Jenkins  
M.S., CCRP, CCRC, CCRA,  
Executive Director,  
Translational Research Institute

"My time with TRI dates to 2009, when UAMS received its first Clinical and Translational Science Award. In 2014, I became the primary contact for researchers needing TRI services. This was not the most efficient process, especially as TRI services became increasingly popular. While the hundreds of individual interactions gave me crucial insight

about our researchers' needs, it was important to deliver more efficient and effective research services and resources. We took a big step in 2016 by automating our services request process with an online portal for researchers (TRI.uams.edu). It's one of the many innovations that have made my years at TRI among the most rewarding of my career."

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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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