

# THE TRIBUNE

APRIL 2024

## Real-World Impact

### Research Day Speakers Exhibit, Extol Transformative Change



UAMS' Susan Emmett, M.D., invited the Research Day audience to "join us in changing the world."

Research Day 2024 drew enthusiastic applause from the 109 attendees who soaked in illuminating keynote presentations by Susan Emmett, M.D., MPH, and Al Richmond, MSW, as well as novel research discussed in oral presentations and at the poster session featuring TRI-supported researchers.

"This is really a day of celebration where we just show you the tip of the iceberg on many many things that are being accomplished throughout our state in translational research and translational science, ultimately moving toward improving health outcomes for the citizens of Arkansas," said TRI Director Laura James, M.D., who welcomed attendees to the third annual event.

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Dear Colleagues,

What an honor it was to host TRI Research Day 2024!

This third annual event brought together researchers from across UAMS' five colleges as well as our partner institutions: Arkansas Children's Research Institute and the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System.

Attendees heard about the incredible rural implementation research project led by Susan Emmett, M.D., one of our keynote speakers. Dr. Emmett's success has lessons for all researchers in how to overcome barriers and deliver impactful research. I love her comment that, "Research has the capacity to change the way that health care is delivered in rural America and beyond."

The inspiring words of Al Richmond, MSW, our second keynote, reminded us of the power of transformative experiences, and the importance of producing meaningful research and advancing health equity.

We had a lot to celebrate with our TRI-supported researchers and their projects. The eight oral presentations

and 22 poster presentations demonstrated how they are successfully leveraging TRI support to help meet the state's health challenges and further their research goals.

As you will read on page 3, attendees relished the presentations and took full advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the company of colleagues from across our research enterprise.

Thank you to all who attended. You and your colleagues helped make this year's event another great success!

Sincerely,

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



*Al Richmond, MSW, delivers his keynote speech.*



*TRI community partner Rev. Willie Wade Jr., director of Difference Makers of Hot Springs, listens to a presentation.*



*Katy Allison, Ph.D. (right), visits with Heather Wright, M.S., during the poster session.*

Richmond is executive director of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, which was founded in 1998 to promote health equity and social justice through partnerships between communities and academic institutions. He is co-principal investigator of the North Carolina Community Engagement Alliance Project and the Community Engagement Alliance Consultative Resource.

He encouraged attendees to seek out transformative experiences, meaningful outcomes in their research, and health equity.

“I want you throughout the day and long after I’m gone to just hold on to that vision for equity in your work,” Richmond said. “Work with your teams and ask yourself this question: ‘If you don’t do anything else, how are we advancing equity or how are we hindering or not achieving equity?’”

### *The Extra Mile*

Emmett’s work is an exemplar of Richmond’s vision.

As founder and director of the UAMS Center for Hearing Health Equity – the first of its kind in the world – she is leading a large-scale implementation project that will bring hearing care to rural Arkansas and other states. The project is built on years of research and overcoming barriers, from restrictive health policies to technology and cost limitations. Before joining UAMS in 2022, she spent three years leading a foundational randomized trial in this area in rural Alaska, where the prevalence of hearing loss, primarily from childhood ear infections, is six-to-nine times the U.S. average.

“We can’t do research for research’s sake, because then we have stopped short of real-world impact,” said Emmett, an associate professor of otolaryngology and epidemiology. “It’s about going that last mile, creating the evidence, and then working with policymakers to ensure that it is put into practice to actually change lives.”

With collaborators across the globe, she aims to significantly reduce the burden of travel and other issues that prevent hearing loss diagnosis and treatment.

She noted that even mild hearing loss doubles the risk of dementia as well as the risk of unemployment. It also triples the risk that a child won’t graduate from high school, yet 70% of children identified with possible hearing loss in schools are lost to follow-up and never enter the healthcare system for treatment. About 80% of individuals with hearing loss worldwide live in rural and underserved settings.

### *Bringing it Home*

“We are bringing innovations home to transform health care delivery right here in this state,” said Emmett, founder and director of Global Hearing Loss Evaluation, Advocacy and Research (HEAR) Collaborative, a multidisciplinary group with collaborators from 28 countries. “I invite you to join us; join us in changing the world. Research has the capacity to change the way that health care is delivered in rural America and beyond.”

She also encouraged the audience’s many research trainees.

“There are so many opportunities for you to create lasting change with the work that you are doing,” said Emmett, who is also the founder and director of HEAR – USA, a national research network dedicated to addressing disparities in hearing loss in underserved and minority U.S. populations. “We have trainees involved in every single project that we do, and we tailor educational experiences for our trainees to fit perfectly with the work that they are doing academically so that they have exposure to real-world research.”

## Research Day - In Their Own Words

Research Day was an opportunity for investigators and research staff to network, gather ideas and feed off the enthusiasm of their peers. **Here is what some had to say:**



“It was great to see what so many other people are doing. This is one of those events where you find ways to engage with other collaborators and come up with creative solutions to problems.”  
– **Jocelyn Anderson Ph.D., RN**, associate professor, UAMS College of Nursing

“Having a Research Day like this is very helpful because we all do our research in different locations and we rarely get a chance to talk to each other. When you come here and attend some of these research meetings, you get to hear about basic science, clinical science and community partnered projects.” – **Shruti Tewar, M.D., MPH**, associate professor of pediatrics and a TRI implementation science scholar



I am impressed by the translational effort of the TRI, which brings researchers across the campus together. As a molecular cancer epidemiologist, I hope to integrate more molecular tools into population-based research and contribute to the ongoing success of the TRI.” – **Yong Zhu, Ph.D.**, professor, Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, and associate director for population science and translational science, Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

“This is a wonderful way to learn about all of these other researchers and clinicians that have similar stories like mine. They’re implementing research that they are so passionate about, and they are overcoming barriers and creating their own pathway to get to their dream.” – **Ashley Pike, Ph.D.**, postdoctoral fellow, TRI Health Sciences Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program trainee



“Coming from a basic science background, I really appreciated the examples of how researchers have involved the community in their research. That and the networking opportunities have provided me with new ideas and resources to help guide my research to the next translational step. – **Brian Piccolo, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of pediatrics, Arkansas Children’s Nutrition Center, and TRI KL2 scholar and pilot grant recipient

## Research Day 2024 Poster Contest Winners

TRI Director Laura James, M.D., concluded Research Day with the presentation of poster awards in four categories, selected by a four-judge panel of UAMS faculty. **The winners are:**

### Best Overall Content (tie):

**David Church, Ph.D.**, assistant professor, College of Medicine Department of Geriatrics; TRI Strategies for Training and Advancing underrepresented Researchers (STARS) Program participant

**Stephen Shrum, Ph.D.**, TL1 postdoctoral scholar in the TRI Health Sciences Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HSIE) training program, College of Pharmacy Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

### Best Overall Visual:

**Akilah Jefferson, M.D., M.Sc.**, assistant professor, College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, Division of Allergy and Immunology; TRI KL2 Mentored Research Career Development Scholar Award Program participant (KL2 scholar)

### Best Overall Impact:

**Timothy “Cody” Ashby, Ph.D.**, assistant professor, College of Medicine Department of Biomedical Informatics, KL2 scholar

### People’s Choice:

**Megha Sharma, M.D., M.S.**, assistant professor in the College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, Division of Neonatology, KL2 Scholar

Winners of the Content, Visual and Impact awards received certificates for their choice of an electronic manuscript submission or support for design of a research poster via TRI, and the People’s Choice winner received a certificate for manuscript submission fee support up to \$2,000.



## Six Teams Graduate from TRI Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Scholars Program



The February graduation of the Community-Based Participatory Research Scholars Program included (l-r): TRI Community Engagement Program Director Tiffany Haynes, Ph.D., and Nicki Spencer, MHA, (front) senior program manager, with Alexandra Marshall, Ph.D., MPH, Jaimi “Mimi” Allen, Ph.D., Ben Amick, Ph.D., Natasha Brown, Anna Huff Davis, Wonder Lowe, Tiffany Miles, Ph.D., Esther Dixon, Miriam Karanja, Trena Mitchell, Willie Wade and Pearman Parker, Ph.D., MPH.

In February, six teams of UAMS researchers and their community partners successfully completed TRI’s Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Scholars Program.

The CBPR program involves collaboration between academic researchers and community-based organizations to address health disparities and promote community health and well-being. CBPR emphasizes the importance of engaging communities in all stages of the research process, from identifying research questions to interpreting results and implementing interventions. This approach aims to ensure that research is relevant to the needs and priorities of the communities being studied, and that research findings are effectively translated into real-world impact and interventions. The CBPR program offers training, support and resources to facilitate the research partnerships. After graduating, teams may be invited to apply for a TRI pilot grant, or they may wish to apply for other grants.

The six graduating teams are:

<p><b>Team 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic principal investigator (PI): Alexandra Marshall, Ph.D., MPH, associate professor, Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education</li> <li>•Community Organization: Engaging Arkansas Communities</li> <li>•Community Leaders: Bobby Pierce, Jeff Walker, Whitley Hopkins and Danny Harris</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic PI: Jaimi “Mimi” Allen, Ph.D., instructor, College of Public Health, Office of Research; Ben Amick, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology and associate dean for Research, College of Public Health</li> <li>•Community Organization: Arkansas Cancer Coalition</li> <li>•Community Leaders: Trena Mitchell, Miriam Karanja and Wonder Lowe</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic PI: Tiffany Miles, Ph.D., post-doctoral fellow, College of Medicine Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Science</li> <li>•Community Organization: Boys Girls Adults Community Development Center, Marvell</li> <li>•Community Leaders: Shakina Gates, Natasha Brown and Dorothy Love</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic PI: Pearman Parker, Ph.D., MPH, RN, assistant professor, College of Nursing Research</li> <li>•Community Organization: The National Witness Project</li> <li>•Community Leader: Dee Johnson</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic PI: Tracie Harrison, Ph.D., RN, professor, UAMS College of Nursing Research; succeeded by Keneshia Bryant-Moore, Ph.D., APRN, professor, College of Public Health</li> <li>•Community Organizations: Difference Makers of Hot Springs and Diamonds in the Rough</li> <li>•Community Leaders: Rev. Willie Wade, Difference Makers; and Esther Dixon, Diamonds in the Rough</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic PI: Suzanne Dhall, Dr.PH., College of Medicine Department of Neurology</li> <li>•Community Organization: Giving Others Ambition Together (G.O.A.T.)</li> <li>•Community Leader: Kelvin Parker</li> </ul>
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