**FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

**The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)**

As part of the University of Arkansas (UA) System, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) is the State’s largest basic and applied research institution with over $130 million in annual research funding and internationally-renowned programs in multiple myeloma, aging and cancer. UAMS is the only academic health sciences center in Arkansas and has an enrollment of more than 2,400 students in six academic units: the Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, Medicine, Health Related Professions, Public Health and the Graduate School. UAMS is one of the largest public employers in the state with over 9,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 physicians who provide medical care to patients at UAMS and its affiliates, Arkansas Children’s Hospital and the VA Medical Center.

UAMS combines the patient care resources of a state-of-the art hospital and outpatient center with the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Research Institute, Harvey and Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Myeloma Institute for Research and Therapy and the Jackson T. Stephens Spine and Neurosciences Institute, and Psychiatric Research Institute. Outreach efforts include eight Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) across the State, and eight satellite Centers on Aging. Nationally recognized Interactive video education and medical consultation services to community hospitals around the state are being enhanced with a recently funded $102 million FCC grant to substantially increase connectivity among not only hospitals but also all public academic institutions (including community colleges) and all Arkansas Department of Health county health units, providing substantial opportunities for the dissemination of programs to eliminate health disparities. Through general, public-oriented health education projects such as the Mini-Medical School and regularly scheduled radio and television programs, UAMS enhances its four-fold mission -- To Teach, To Search, To Heal, To Serve. Through education, research, clinical care programs, and community service statewide, UAMS fulfills its unique role as the foundation of the health care system in Arkansas.

**UAMS Resources**

UAMS Library

The UAMS Library occupies 47,000 square feet of space in the Education II Building (Ed II), and currently serves students and faculty in the Colleges of Medicine, Public Health, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Related Professions, and the Graduate School. The UAMS Library is a modern, well equipped biomedical library that features a variety of online and print information resources, including 45,000 books (about 80 of which are online), 130,000 bound volumes of journals, over 2,000 current journal subscriptions (nearly all of the current 2,000 are available online), 3,000 microfilm volumes, and 4,400 media pieces. In addition to the major collections housed in the library are small and highly specialized collections of medical history and rare and obscure medical texts.

On-campus and remote access to the library’s online catalog and many full-text information resources is provided through the library’s website (www.library.uams.edu). The library provides access to the Ovid system of databases, which includes the complete MEDLINE database back to 1966, the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), the Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI), PsycINFO, Current Contents/ Clinical Medicine and Life Sciences sections, International Pharmaceutical Abstracts (IPA), and the Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) reviews databases. Bibliographies of citations or abstracts and many full-text articles can be obtained through Ovid, as well as PubMed, which is the National Library of Medicine’s search engine for its databases. Both Ovid and PubMed link from database citations to many of the library’s full-text journals. The library’s website also includes information about its services, links to the library’s catalog and other Arkansas libraries’ catalogs, and links to many other electronic reference and research materials, including government reports, statistical databases, and other information of particular interest to public health faculty and students.

The library subscribes to more than 100 public health journals, has purchased over 200 public health books in the past several years. The library’s catalog also links to many online public health reports, statistical resources, and other online information resources of particular value to public health professionals and students. The library director works closely with faculty to identify resources to be added that are of value to faculty and students. In addition to the UAMS Library, COPH faculty and students may use the libraries of other universities in the state. For example, UAMS has cooperative agreements with both University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and the University of Central Arkansas. Patrons can find information about these collections at the UAMS Library through the Arkansas Union List of Serials and the Arkansas Union Catalog.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) in the library provides many services, including access to curriculum related, computer-based instruction programs, and audiovisual materials and models. Window-of-time testing in support of classes is also provided. The LRC includes several group viewing rooms, a classroom equipped with computers, and a student computer laboratory that provides access to a wide variety of computer-based educational resources, scanning and image manipulation programs for student presentations, Microsoft Office applications, Internet access, e-mail, and access to the library’s online information resources. The Faculty Development Room provides state-of-the-art equipment and technical support for faculty who are developing online courses and presentations. The Access Grid Room facilitates collaboration of faculty and students with peers from other institutions by enabling them to meet virtually and communicate interactively over the Internet.

The UAMS library participates in consortium agreements with ARKLink (college and university libraries

throughout Arkansas) and SCAMeL (South Central Academic Medical Libraries in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas), which jointly purchase some online resources and discuss ways to share and improve access to information. The library also shares a network of biomedical information resources with the AHEC and DHEC libraries, Arkansas Children's Hospital Library, and the John L. McClellan VA Medical Center Library. Liaison between the Little Rock campuses and the Fayetteville campus of the University of Arkansas is excellent and requested materials are available within five to seven days.

Translational Research Institute (TRI)

The TRI was established at UAMS in 2009 with funding from the NIH through competition for a Center for Translational Science Award (CTSA). The center's overarching goal is to transform the pace, effectiveness, and quality of translational research among UAMS and its partners, resulting in better health for all Arkansans. The TRI includes scientists from all UAMS colleges and disciplines, with representatives from all CCTR external partners and the statewide community.

Office of Educational Development (OED)

The mission of the UAMS Office of Educational Development (OED) is to improve teaching and learning at UAMS by providing consultation and services to faculty in such areas as effective teaching methodologies, educational evaluation and assessment, curriculum development and assessment, and effective use of educational technologies. The OED is staffed by seven specialists with graduate training in pedagogy and educational research, all of whom also have extensive experience specifically in health professions education. The OED has provided ongoing guidance to COPH faculty, including consulting with the Department of Epidemiology faculty on development of quality syllabi and working with multiple COPH faculty in developing high-quality online course materials. The OED also coordinates and sponsors the UAMS Teaching Scholars Program, which provides intensive support (two 3-hour meetings per month) in teaching skills development, curricular design, development of online courses, and student assessment, and brings national experts in pedagogy specific to the health professions to UAMS.

Center for Diversity Affairs (CDA)

The CDA, led by Dr. Billy Thomas, has the overall mission of developing a more competitive applicant pool of disadvantaged students that will gain entrance to and matriculate through each of the UAMS colleges, resulting in a more diverse health and health care workforce. The CDA has partnerships with multiple community-based organizations and schools, including Black Community Developers; Henderson Health Sciences Magnet Middle School and Central High School; Pulaski Technical College (a 2-year college), Philander Smith College (local HBCU), the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (local HBCU); and the UAMS Office of Regional Programs. The CDA is also shepherding development of a coordinated plan to stimulate changes in the institutional culture of UAMS related to diversity, cultural competency, and understanding of racial and ethnic health disparities. This plan has been approved by the Chancellor and includes conducting a campus-wide environmental audit, the results of which will inform development of a long-range strategic plan to address these issues.

Center for Distance Health (CDH)

The CDH has long been immersed in educational, distance health and other telecommunication efforts, providing education through distance health technology to an array of participants, including physicians, clinicians, patients, students, researchers and for general teleconferencing purposes. Founded in July 2006, the Center is a relatively new, innovative UAMS Center that supports university faculty and staff in responding to the demands for dynamic, contemporary health care. CDH is not only the logical integration of clinical and educational telehealth services at UAMS, but also an organized research and outreach network. The Center promotes the university’s mission by supporting utilization of UAMS’ expertise to effectively reduce disparities in health care in Arkansas, while supporting ground-breaking research and cutting-edge programs. CDH serves as a conduit for the coordination of distance health care activities between UAMS and individuals and organizations across the state. Delivering both educational and clinical telehealth programs, the CDH establishes UAMS ahead of the technology curve, while aligning UAMS with federal telehealth initiatives. CDH facilitates coordinated, successful implementation of clinical and educational telemedicine and outreach services for additional specialties and disciplines at UAMS, establishing the University's proactive leadership in this inevitable evolution of health care delivery.

The recent award of a $102 million FCC award to UAMS as the lead in an alliance of health care organizations and academic institutions across Arkansas to expand connectivity will boost efforts to extend telehealth access to rural Arkansas. With the connectivity across rural Arkansas that is soon to be available, we anticipate that collaborations with CDH will become increasingly important in delivering relatively low-cost programs to Arkansans, contributing to efforts to eliminate minority health disparities.

**UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH)**

The UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH) is 1 of 46 currently accredited schools of public health in the US. The COPH was established in July 2001 with funds made available by The Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act (Initiated Act I) which mandated that all monies received by Arkansas under the Tobacco Settlement Agreement would be used for health-related programs, particularly those that were prevention-oriented and addressed important health issues for the State. In keeping with this mandate, the Vision for the COPH was defined as “Optimal Health for All”. The COPH established an overarching Mission “to improve the health and promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Arkansas through education, research, and service” and was established with an underlying orientation to CBPH approaches, as detailed later in the Resources section. To fulfill this Vision and Mission, the COPH has adopted a strong commitment to a community-based, participatory approach to health promotion. The COPH has made a commitment to collaborate with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) in the development of education, research, and service activities intended to apply this philosophy. A Joint Oversight Committee has been established to coordinate these complementary efforts. In addition to prevention, research and service, programs to eliminate health disparities remain among the highest priorities for the COPH, given the significant health disparities evidenced in the State.

In September 2003, the COPH moved into a new permanent facility on the UAMS campus. It currently occupies 3 1/3 floors of a six-story structure (approximately 20,000 gross sf/floor). This facility offers state-of-the-art offices, classrooms, and meeting rooms. It also houses two well-equipped distance-learning classrooms with digital cameras, monitors, and associated hardware/software for streaming video. These resources are coordinated and supported by the recently created Center for Distance Health (CDH), providing integrated and coordinated access to a large number of distance sites for education, teleconferencing, and research coordination. A large, 173-seat auditorium provides high-quality technological resources for education, including grid access via Internet2 for connecting to other Internet2 facilities nationwide. Campus-wide classrooms are located in the building abutting the COPH building, and several of these classrooms are equipped with compressed video technology that is used by UAMS programs for distance learning and Continuing Education/Continuing Medical Education programs throughout the state, in coordination with the similarly equipped UAMS Regional Centers and rural hospitals throughout the state. In support of interprofessional interactions among faculty, staff, and students, this well-equipped building houses the COPH, College of Pharmacy, and College of Nursing.

Although UAMS provides substantial information technology (IT) support for all of its colleges, the COPH provides additional resources, including: (1) IT-interface support to provide a technical and administrative linkage to university-wide IT facilities and resources, (2) two computer laboratories located in the new COPH building for teaching laboratory-based classes and for general student use when the laboratories are not being used for scheduled classroom instruction, and (3) computers for faculty and staff. A senior-level network administrator dedicated to the COPH serves as an interface between faculty, staff, and students and centralized UAMS computer support. The network administrator serves as an advocate for COPH needs in university planning and as a resource in COPH planning.

The COPH has rapidly grown and is currently comprised of more than 54 faculty members, with more than 180 additional part-time (secondary and adjunct) faculty contributing to the teaching, research, and services activities in five academic departments. More than 260 students are currently enrolled in 1 of 17 different graduate degree and combined degree programs. The COPH has an increasingly broad and skilled faculty that provides leadership and support for several key national, state, and community health initiatives. COPH faculty members undertake an array of important research initiatives relevant to the prevention and control of diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic illnesses. Issues being addressed include obesity, tobacco use, cancer screening, oral health, bioterrorism, health care organization, health services research, and health behavior. The COPH is particularly committed to education, research, and service that address these issues, as they are relevant to reducing health disparities among under-resourced and economically disadvantaged groups. In the first 12 years of the COPH, its researchers have been awarded millions in current, active extramural research funding that focuses on evidence-based best practices to improve the health of Arkansans.

The COPH was initially accredited in May 2004 as a school of public health in a record-setting time. The College was fully re-accredited for a full 7 years in June 2007 with all accreditation criteria met or met with some commentary (a category of being met). Key organizational units of the COPH are summarized below:

**COPH Departments**

The College has the following five Departments, collectively comprising an interdisciplinary faculty with adequate depth in all five core areas to fully meet CEPH accreditation criteria for schools of public health since first accredited in 2004.

Department of Biostatistics

The Department of Biostatistics is composed of 4 doctoral-level primary faculty, 1.0 FTE of part-time faculty with 6 additional secondary/adjunct faculty. However, led by a common Chair, the Department of Biostatistics is complemented by the UAMS College of Medicine Department of Biostatistics that includes an additional 6 faculty. Although these departments are structurally separated into the two colleges, they are functionally one department with common leadership and complementary faculty expertise. The faculty are actively involved in design and analysis of research studies in many different biological and human health-related disciplines including activities that cross departmental lines.

Department of Environmental and Occupational Health

The Department of Environmental and Occupational Health is composed of 6 primary faculty and 19 secondary/adjunct faculty. The faculty are experts in recognizing, evaluating, and controlling health hazards encountered in the occupational and community environment with particular expertise in areas such as risk assessment; chemical, forensic, and industrial toxicology; biological safety; and water quality.

Department of Epidemiology

The Department of Epidemiology currently includes 3 primary full-time faculty, an additional 2.0 FTE of part-time faculty, and 19 secondary/adjunct faculty. The faculty’s research and practice activities address a broad range of public health issues with particular depth in the areas of cardiovascular disease, cancer, congenital birth defects, mental health and infectious disease.

Department of Health Behavior and Health Education

The Department of Health Behavior and Health Education currently has 10 full-time primary, 0.6 FTE part-time, and 18 other secondary/adjunct faculty who collaborate with other departments in the COPH, other colleges and departments on the UAMS campus and throughout the University of Arkansas system. Areas of research interest and expertise include developing and evaluating theory-based strategies to reduce cardiovascular risk, cancer prevention and control, obesity prevention and treatment, technology-based behavioral interventions, and HIV risk reduction, as well as a focus on community-based intervention and underserved, disadvantaged populations.

Department of Health Policy and Management

The Department of Health Policy and Management consists of 12 primary and over 75 secondary/adjunct academic, research, practice and policy-maker appointments. Current areas of research include minority health, rural health, aging, access to care and insurance, mental health, injury control and prevention, quality assessment, child health, Medicare and Medicaid policy analysis, community-based public health, obesity prevention and control and outcomes evaluation. Department faculty are involved in policy and legislative initiatives that impact cancer prevention and control efforts.

Office of Community-based Public Health (OCBPH)

The OCBPH is a COPH-wide resource to promote CBPH and community-based participatory research. This office works to develop and maintain close partnerships with selected communities that are envisioned as increasingly serving as partners in model programs of community-based participatory public health programs. In addition, it provides resources for COPH faculty, students, and staff on CBPH theories and methods; assists in the development of new community-based educational, service, and research programs; and supports development and implementation of community-based participatory research grant projects. This office has three staff (two based in the COPH and one based in Phillips County) that serve as community liaisons between our community partners and the COPH.

Engaged Institutions Initiative of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

In 2005, each of the five primary COPH community partners was involved with the COPH in the completion of a self-assessment on community engagement and racial and ethnic health disparities, which assessed the COPH as frequently acknowledging the importance of community-based learning but assessed the UAMS institution overall as infrequently acknowledging the importance of community-based learning. COPH faculty, staff and community partners who completed the assessment perceived the existence of few informal and formal mechanisms to encourage and/or reward students or faculty for community engagement.

The self-assessment findings supported planning discussions for an application for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation-sponsored Engaged Institutions Initiative of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. This initiative was developed by Kellogg because of their recognition that eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities will require collaborative solutions that bring communities and institutions together. The College was selected through a competitive grant review process as one of 12 schools and programs nationally to participate. Through this initiative, the COPH received consultation from national experts and sponsored two retreats. The first retreat focused on community-based participatory approaches, and the second on institutional strategies for addressing racial and ethnic health and health care disparities. Both were attended by community and ADH partners, UAMS faculty, the UAMS Chancellor, and Deans from three UAMS colleges. In September, 2006, the first round of consultations took place with visits from public health experts Dr. Larry Green and Ms. Ella Moton, who conducted forums, workshops, and a College-wide retreat, which was to advance the COPH faculty’s understanding of and participation in CBPR and CBPH. A second set of consultants, Dr. Tom LaVeist and Ms. Vickie Ybarra, visited the College in May 2007. This retreat resulted in recommendations and working groups to follow-up on achieving improvements in three areas: 1) professional education on disparities and cross-cultural issues, 2) student diversity, and 3) policies affecting disparities.

Arkansas Health Disparities Service-Learning Collaborative

The self-assessment and findings from the Engaged Institutions Initiative retreats sparked discussion of ways to more fully involve students with communities, along with other priorities. These evolved into planning discussions for the Arkansas Health Disparities Service Learning Initiative, through which the COPH established specific service-learning (preceptorship) opportunities and a health disparities service learning course.

The Arkansas Health Disparities Service-Learning Collaborative (AHDSLC) was subsequently funded by the Corporation for National Community Service through Campus Community Partnerships for Health and has provided support for a number of activities with potential for reducing disparities and increasing the role of service learning in the COPH. The overall goal of this initiative is to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities by engaging public health and other health professions students and faculty in tailored service learning partnerships with community-based organizations, state and local agencies, policymakers, and others.

The AHDSLC advances the mission and goals of the COPH and the OCBPH by institutionalizing requirements and opportunities for community-based service learning focused on the elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities. Because of the long-term commitment made by the COPH to its community partners, and because of the longevity and solid roots of the COPH’s partners within the communities they serve, longitudinal plans for service learning activities were developed together. Our vision is for students to have an opportunity to engage in ongoing program and research activities being carried out through our existing partnerships. Our approach is innovative in bringing community partners into the classroom to help in educating students. Their voice provides critical content for students in learning about the determinants of racial and ethnic health disparities; in helping them better understand the expertise grassroots communities bring to the table; and in teaching students how to engage communities effectively. As described elsewhere in the Resources section under our training activities, a number of students and faculty have already participated in service learning opportunities with our community partners as part of the AHDSLC. These experiences served to develop students’ achievement of core public health competencies while also contributing to community efforts to decrease health disparities.

**COPH Centers**

Although COPH faculty have been recruited who appreciate, value, and practice interdisciplinary collaboration, to ensure an interdisciplinary focus on prevention of the major sources of morbidity and mortality, the COPH has internally funded two centers: the Center for the Study of Obesity (CSO) and the Center for the Study of Tobacco (CST). Two extramurally funded Centers now complement the two internal ones and include the Arkansas Center for Health Disparities (ARCHD), first funded by NIMHD in 2007, and the Arkansas Prevention Research Center (ARPRC) funded in September 2009 as one of CDC’s Prevention Research Centers. These four Centers are charged not only with achieving their respective specific aims but also with fostering the recruitment of interdisciplinary faculty, assisting in the education/training of students in their respective content areas, and furthering the development of interdisciplinary research programs that, in turn, support educational and service programs.

Center for the Study of Obesity (CSO)

Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable morbidity and mortality. This Center houses the newly-created Governor Sidney S. McMath Professorship in Obesity Prevention, which was endowed through a health-related, multi-state legal settlement. The professorship will support a senior faculty member with a focus on control and prevention of obesity; enable the professor to work with the college to develop an obesity prevention curriculum; and allow the college to better serve the state, governor and legislature as a resource and advocate for public health. A national search is currently underway to recruit senior leadership to direct the CSO.

Center for the Study of Tobacco (CST)

Tobacco use is the most prevalent preventable risk factor for morbidity and mortality in Arkansas as it is throughout the nation. While much has been accomplished in recent years, new approaches are needed to lower smoking prevalence by preventing initiation of tobacco use and promoting cessation among high-risk age, gender, income, and ethnic groups. The vision of the CST is to create a vibrant state where the costs of tobacco use and exposure are no longer a burden to Arkansans. The mission of the CST is to engage multiple disciplines in conducting collaborative and innovative research designed to inform public health policies and enhance interventions to reduce tobacco use of any kind. The CST serves as a focal point for research, training, and translational research in Arkansas where there are unique opportunities to build synergy and address tobacco use. The CST has four strategic priorities which are infrastructure development and sustainability; integration and innovation in research; teaching, training, and mentoring future leader; and translation and dissemination. The resources include a Project Coordinator and space for student research assistant to work.

Arkansas Prevention Research Center (ARPRC)

The ARPRC, established in 2009 with CDC funding, developed on the community-based orientation established from the very beginnings of the COPH and further developed in the ensuing 10 years. The College’s strong community-based orientation led to strong community partnerships and active participation of community partners in COPH strategic planning, research, education/training and service programs, as well as in the preparation of the ARPRC application, reflected by community partner leadership at all levels of the center. In its current funding, the ARPRC is structured as a consortium between three entities (COPH, Arkansas Department of Health, community partners) with the mission to develop research and educational programs to enhance public health practice in order to reduce risks for chronic diseases among those who bear the greatest risk in the state, Arkansas' racial and ethnic minorities, and a goal of eliminating chronic disease health disparities. The major research focus is identifying cost-effective methods of better controlling hypertension (HTN), a leading, easily controllable risk factor for a variety of leading sources of morbidity and mortality, particularly in Arkansas where uncontrolled HTN (u-HTN) is exceedingly common. Public health practice approaches to enhance HTN treatment via cost-effective methods are likely scalable and sustainable if they can be integrated in the rapid health care reform occurring in Arkansas, providing a model for other sectors of the nation.

*ARPRC Partners Advisory Committee (PAC)*. A PAC was formed to convene health and public health leaders in Arkansas to educate them about the research projects, enlist their support in educating others, and then helping to disseminate and secure funding for CHWs in order to sustain and expand the Take Control Program for uncontrolled hypertensions (u-HTN).

**Education, Training and Mentoring in the COPH**

The COPH provides education/training in a variety of formats, including: formal, graduate degree programs; continuing education programs; technical assistance, presentations and informal training, usually to public health practitioners; and informal workshops, typically delivered to or in partnership with community-based groups and organizations. Below, we briefly summarize activities in each of these areas.

Graduate Degree Programs

The COPH offers 17 different versions of formal graduate education programs, including:

* Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
* Certificate in Occupational and Environmental Health
* MPH with specialization in each of the College’s five departments:
	+ Biostatistics
	+ Environmental and Occupational Health
	+ Epidemiology
	+ Health Behavior and Health Education
	+ Health Policy and Management
* Generalist MPH, an interdisciplinary degree in which students develop a plan under the direction of an interdisciplinary faculty committee for individualized elective courses which count toward the degree
* MS in Occupational and Environmental Health
* Master of Health Services Administration (MHSA)
* 5 combined degrees: MD/MPH; JD/MPH; PharmD/MPH; the combined MPS/MPH with the UA Clinton School of Public Service; and the combined MA (in Speech Communication) and MPH
* 4 combined BA or BS/MPH programs with undergraduate institutions, including Arkansas’ 3 HBCUs with support from ARCHD: Arkansas Baptist College, Hendrix College, Philander Smith College, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
* Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) in Public Health Leadership, an interdisciplinary degree
* PhD in Health Systems Research, based in the COPH’s Department of Health Policy and Management
* PhD in Health Promotion and Prevention Research, based in the COPH’s Department of Health Behavior and Health Education

All of these programs require exposure to all core areas of public health and involve very active mentoring systems, with two levels of mentorship: 1) an Administrative Advisor who is a staff member in the Office of Student Services, and 2) at least one Faculty Advisor. The Administrative Advisor allows ready student access to a staff member who is a consistent source of information for routine policy guidance, course planning, mentoring, and other procedural/administrative matters. The Faculty Advisor(s) provides students with mentorship and guidance on elective course planning, career planning and advice, professional development, and other matters.

Continuing Education Programs for Public Health Practitioners

Since late 2001 when the COPH was formed, the College has offered two different, weekly conferences for public health professional continuing education, both of which are co-sponsored with the ADH: Public Health Grand Rounds, offered at the ADH; and the Tuesday Public Health Conference held at the COPH. Conferences are attended by ADH and COPH faculty, students, and staff, as well as practice, academic, legislative, and sometimes community partners.

**COPH Community Partners**

In early strategic planning activities, the COPH made a commitment to working with community partners based on a recognition of the importance of community-based public health and the belief that much of what needs to be done for prevention at the community level is being done within communities and through community-based organizations (CBOs). This commitment is the basis upon which close partnerships have been developed with a number of CBOs and community coalitions engaged in public health practice. A description of these CBOs is provided below.

Tri-County Rural Health Network/Walnut Street Works (TCRHN)

TCRHN is a CBO with a long and productive history with the COPH. In addition to a number of on-going projects, this CBO is among several that have participated in COPH’s strategic planning, and many community members have participated in educational programs through providing guest lectures in classes, serving on panels in classes, and working with students in MPH and DrPH practica, MPH culminating experiences projects, DrPH capstone projects and PhD student projects.

*TCRHN’s Community Connector Program*. TCRHN initially developed the Community Connector Program with funding from HRSA (through the Mid-Delta Community Consortium’s Delta Rural Network Development Program) and the Foundation for the Mid-South in response to findings from an asset mapping project using the methodology of deliberative democracy. The asset map documented that low-income minorities were underutilizing existing community health and social services due to lack of knowledge, understanding, and trust and documented other challenges in navigating formal service delivery systems. The CCP was piloted as a “linking service” to address these community-identified access-related needs. After successfully initiating the pilot, the COPH Office of Community Based Public Health helped TCRHN obtain funds from the Arkansas Department of Human Services and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to focus the Community Connector Program more narrowly on addressing barriers faced by adults with physical disabilities and elderly in need of long-term care in accessing home- and community-based services (HCBS). These barriers included lack of information and counseling about HCBS, mistrust of existing formal informational sources, and difficulties navigating the fragmented HCBS system. In addition, COPH faculty have formally evaluated the CCP, focusing on Medicaid savings generated by the CCP through decreased use of institutional care. The overall evaluation documented Medicaid cost savings with a return on investment of almost three dollars per dollar invested and has lead Medicaid to fund an expansion of the CCP from 3 to a total of 15 counties in the region.

Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas (CTFA)

CTFA consists of numerous organizations including professional societies, grassroots organizations, and non-profit organizations whose common goals are the reduction of tobacco use and the adoption of policies to create smoke-free environments in Arkansas. CTFA has been involved in many critical tobacco education and prevention efforts. CTFA was actively involved in the CHART campaign in 2000, the State Board of Health restaurant ban proposal in 2001, the tobacco tax increase campaign in 2003 and numerous other educational and coalition building activities over the past 15 years.

Faith Task Forces of Phillips and Jefferson Counties

The Faith Task Force began in Phillips County 11 years ago with the purpose of connecting faith and health to improve the health of diverse congregations and the broader community. The Faith Task Forces consist of local clergy, parishioners, and community leaders within the two Arkansas Delta counties and have accomplished a great deal in health disparities research, including partnering with UAMS on various National Institutes of Health (NIH), Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), and U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded health research and programming projects. The Faith Task Forces have extensive networks across the Arkansas Delta, including the Arkansas State Baptist Convention; The Central District; Phillips County Ministerial Alliance; the Bethlehem District; the Southeast District; the Greater Phillips, Lee, Monroe, and Desha Counties District; the East Arkansas and West Mississippi Fellowship; and individual churches represented by Faith Task Force members. The Faith Task Forces represent various Protestant denominations, including Baptist, Church of Christ, Methodist, Episcopal, Church of God, Apostolic, and Non-Denominational, and the Nation of Islam.

FAITH Network

The FAITH Network is a collaboration between UAMS and faith organizations in Arkansas to provide an infrastructure that supports faith-based research. The goal of the FAITH Network is to build the faith community’s capacity to engage in partnered comparative effectiveness research and Patient Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) by providing continuous training opportunities specific to the needs of the faith community. This will also provide an opportunity for faith leaders to build upon the concept of “community-building-community”. This is when faith leaders with PCOR experience serve as mentors and advisors to those faith leaders who are new to PCOR. The network is co-led with Dr. Keneshia Bryant by a local Pastor, who is a community leader, concerned citizen of Mississippi County, Arkansas, and member of the Trinity Life Management project.

Arkansas Community Health Workers Association (ARCHWA)

ARCHWA is a state-wide non-profit organization that serves and is led by community health workers across Arkansas. Founded in 2013, ARCHWA’s mission is to support Arkansas community health workers in promoting improvements in health and health care. The main objectives are to: provide training, continuing education and career advancement opportunities; advocate for steady and reliable funding for community health worker programs; increase public and professional recognition of community health worker knowledge, skills and contributions; and convene community health workers to share resources and offer mutual support. ARCHWA has a majority CHW member board of directors and in June 2017, ARCHWA will host its 5th annual CHW Summit.

Arkansas Community Institute (ACI) / Arkansas Community Organizations (ACO)

ACI’s mission is to empower low to moderate-income residents economically through: 1. Asset building activities such as home ownership counseling, financial literacy, and outreach and education on programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); 2. Leadership development; 3. Research and advocacy on policies; and 4. Education and organizing around existing policies that address barriers to economic empowerment and advancement. ACO is one of Arkansas’ largest grassroots organizations, organizing low-income and working families from across the state to enable them to fight for social and economic justice. ACO has been the main community-based service learning organizational partner for the COPH’s racial and ethnic health disparities course for the past six years. This partnership has allowed COPH masters and doctoral students to participate in projects that allow them to see how issues contributing disparities play out in the real world in the policy arena at both the state and local level. These projects have focused on the Medicaid expansion, tenants’ rights, incarceration, threats to neighborhood schools, and neighborhood displacement through gentrification. ACO is led by Mr. Neil Sealy and a strong, engaged board of directors from the community.

Arkansas Transgender Equity Collaborative (ArTEC)

ArTEC is a statewide, transgender led non-profit organization established in 2014 to advance equality, justice and inclusiveness for transgender and gender non-binary Arkansans by educational awareness, resources and gender-inclusive communities within the state. ArTEC is led by a transgender majority board of directors that works together to carry out its mission. ArTEC has been a community partner of the COPH since 2014 through its members’ providing education through workshops and guest lectures and panels and through the Transform Health Arkansas initiative. Transform Health is an initiative started through an ArTEC – COPH partnership in May 2015 with Tier I Pipeline to Proposals funding from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to engage transgender/ non-binary individuals in Arkansas in identifying their greatest health and healthcare concerns. ArTEC has subsequently received a Tier II award from PCORI, a small grant from the Fred E. Darragh Foundation. Dr. Dani Smith Archie and Dr. Stewart co-lead Transform Health with an interdisciplinary Research Working Group that meets monthly. Drs. Archie and Alex Marshall (HBHE faculty) recently received a small grant from the UAMS Office of Interprofessional Education to develop IPE educational materials on transgender health issues for UAMS students.

Plant a Seed Foundation

Plant a Seed Foundation is a 501c3 community-based organization in Camden, Arkansas established by Mr. Charles Moore to benefit the city’s disadvantaged youth. From the city's lvra Clark Park, Moore was able to tutor kids in science, math, literature and, most importantly, life skills through his foundation. But the foundation eventually outgrew the park and was able to secure a vacant Boys & Girls Club facility where they have been serving hundreds of children in summer and after school programs since 2014. The foundation earned recognition as a 2014 City of Distinction award for quality of life because of its work to help children learn how to address the problems they face such as poverty, hunger and homelessness. Plant a Seed foundation focuses on a balanced approach of outdoor and sporting, educational, and life skills activities. Plant a Seed has partnered with UAMS researchers conducting research on asthma and founder, Charles Moore, serves as a member of the Translational Research Institute’s Community Advisory Board and advised in development of the Community Patient Scientist Academy.

**Key COPH Agency/Institutional Partnerships**

The COPH is significantly involved with several statewide agency and institutional partners in providing technical assistance for service programs, research projects, and educational programs. Arkansas’ three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs – Arkansas Baptist College, Philander Smith College, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff), the Arkansas Minority Health Commission (AMHC), the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement are described below.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Arkansas

The three HBCUs located within the state of Arkansas are substantially involved with the COPH in developing 4+1 programs, allowing undergraduate students to apply for the COPH MPH program during their sophomore year, take MPH coursework during the junior and senior years, and have this coursework apply to their undergraduate degree requirements. Students will normally complete their undergraduate degrees in the usual 4 years and then go on to finish their MPH degrees in 1 year instead of the normal 2, since they will have already completed some of their MPH coursework prior to receiving their undergraduate degrees – thus the name “4+1”.

*Arkansas Baptist College*. Founded in 1884 in Little Rock, AR, the College was founded with the primary objective of raising “the educational level of the Negro ministry.” Arkansas Baptist offers a four-year liberal arts education. Arkansas Baptist College has over 900 students and 60 faculty members. The college offers degrees in business administration, human services, criminal justice and religious studies and has identified as a core value the goal of preparing student for graduate training and professional schools.

*Philander Smith College*. Established in 1877 in Little Rock, Philander Smith College is Arkansas’s oldest private HBCU and is a four-year Liberal Arts College affiliated with the United Methodist Church and the United Negro College Fund (UNC). Philander Smith is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Association for Collegiate and Business Schools and Programs, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Council on Social Work Education, and is approved by The Arkansas State Department of Education, the University Senate of the United Methodist Church, and the United Negro College Fund. Philander has over 700 students and over 90 faculty members.

*University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB)*. UAPB, located in the Arkansas Delta and the only public HBCU in Arkansas, was created in 1873 by Legislative Act. Enrollment at UAPB has grown to over 3200 students and 164 faculty members. Ninety-four percent of the students are African-American. The majority of undergraduates at UAPB major in the social and behavioral sciences, nursing, biology, and chemistry/physics.

Arkansas Minority Health Commission (AMHC)

It was brought to the attention of the Arkansas Legislature in 1991 that disparities existed in the health status of minorities within our state. To address this issue, Act 912 of the 1991 Arkansas General Assembly created the Arkansas Minority Health Commission. The Act identifies "Minorities" as Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and American Indians. The Commission is made up of 12 commissioners with two members of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives serving as members. The Mission of the AMHC is to assure all minority Arkansans access to health care that is equal to the care provided to other citizens of the state and to seek ways to provide education, address, treat, and prevent diseases and conditions that are prevalent among minority populations. The AMHC’s mission statement focuses on four areas of responsibility: 1) study issues relating to the delivery of and access to health services to minorities in the state; 2) Identify any gaps in the health service delivery system that particularly affect minorities; 3) make recommendations to the relevant agencies and to the legislature for improving the delivery of and access to the health services for minorities; and 4) study and make recommendations as to whether services are available to insure future minority health needs will be met.

While the AMHC’s mission does not focus on research, it is included in its mission. The AMHD is primarily dedicated to dissemination of best practices to improve the health of Arkansas minorities.

Arkansas Department of Health (ADH)

Arkansas has only one public health agency, the ADH, with a central, state office, located less than two blocks from the COPH, and at least one local health unit in each of the state’s 75 counties. Leadership in the ADH was instrumental in advocating for the creation of the COPH by the Legislature with Initiated Act 1 of 2000. The ADH leadership envisioned the COPH as a critical collaborator for realizing the vision of creating an academic health department. With the creation of the COPH, this vision has progressed, and a number of key collaborations continue to develop, including many examples such as: Joe Bates, MD, MPH, Deputy Health Officer in the ADH, has served as the COPH Associate Dean of Public Health Practice since the college was established. The relationship between the ADH and the COPH is extremely strong, providing opportunities to collaborate and access to additional resources (e.g., dissemination resources for health disparities information, data to examine health disparities in Arkansas and establish research priorities, and local health unit expertise about local assets as well as meeting facilities within the health units themselves). These collaborations between the COPH and the ADH are evident at the highest levels of both organizations, and extend down through both organizations as well. A number of other ADH staff also have faculty appointments in the COPH where they teach, mentor students and participate in research projects, and many COPH faculty contribute to the ADH through providing technical expertise, participating in research and service programs, and serving in programs to educate the ADH workforce about public health.

Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI)

Joe Thompson, MD, MPH is the Director of the ACHI, a nonpartisan, independent health policy center dedicated to improving the health of Arkansans. It is jointly supported by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield. ACHI was formed in 1998 as an innovative solution to the health crisis faced by Arkansas by the poor health of the population, the very high numbers of uninsured, the lack access to quality health care, and the significant racial health disparities found in the state. Working with public- and private-sector partners, ACHI is a catalyst for improving the health of Arkansans through evidence-based research, public issue advocacy, and collaborative program development. Since its inception, ACHI has become a trusted health policy leader, receiving both state and national recognition for its efforts to continue debate, dialogue, and development of strategies that advance the health and productivity of Arkansas residents. Governance is provided by an independent, self-perpetuating 21-member Health Policy Board which identifies and establishes strategic priorities, provides direction and guidance, and serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas. The Health Policy Board determines ACHI's involvement in and position on specific policy issues.

The COPH and ACHI have a close and collaborative partnership. Joe Thompson, MD, MPH, has a primary faculty appointment in the UAMS Department of Pediatrics and he holds a secondary appointment in the COPH’s Department of Health Policy and Management, where he has been actively involved in numerous collaborations with faculty and advising and mentoring students. Dr. Thompson has served as Arkansas Surgeon General, appointed by former Governor Mike Huckabee and former Governor Mike Beebe. The expertise of a number of other COPH faculty has been enlisted by ACHI for a number of its initiatives. The relationship between ACHI and the COPH is unique and complementary, allowing ACHI to serve as an independent advocate for health policy which faculty in a state-supported academic institution could not, while faculty in the COPH have access to students, expertise in health policy and research that substantially bolster that of ACHI staff, and substantial research experience to draw upon in formulating evidence-based health policy. The relationship with ACHI provides a number of benefits, including: an association with an established, trusted and visible partner, helping to establish credibility; a partner which can often advocate and develop policy which a public academic institution cannot always do; and opportunities for dissemination of information about health disparities through legislative and other channels not readily available to COPH faculty and staff.

**COPH Facilities**

Computers

Although UAMS provides substantial information technology (IT) support for all of its colleges, the COPH provides additional resources. Included among these resources are the following: (1) IT-interface support to provide a technical and administrative linkage to university-wide IT facilities and resources, (2) two computer laboratories located in the new COPH building for teaching laboratory-based classes and for general student use when the laboratories are not being used for scheduled classroom instruction, and (3) computers for faculty and staff. A senior-level network administrator is allocated in the COPH to serve as an interface between faculty, staff, and students and centralized UAMS computer support. The administrator serves as an advocate for the needs of the COPH in university planning and as a resource in planning in the COPH. He also supervises a full-time COPH staff member to oversee the COPH computer laboratory and other IT systems.

Faculty have desktop PC’s with Intel Processors. SAS, SPSS, Microsoft Office, Spreadsheets and secure web portals. The UAMS Information Technology department provides support in identification of appropriate hardware and software, purchasing, installation and maintenance of a variety of computer systems. Central servers with extended systems provide research, patient care, instructional and administrative support. The Interactive Technology Division provides extensive training, software and technical support services and periodic system upgrades, including an automated central help desk.

COPH Office Facilities

Faculty have dedicated office space, equipment, administrative and grant support services in the relatively new COPH building (opened in 2003). Three floors (approximately 20,000 square feet per floor) of the building are dedicated to the College, housing faculty, staff, students and research activities, (including dry-laboratory space for research projects), and additional COPH space is available if needed.