



**ARKANSAS TOBACCO
SETTLEMENT COMMISSION**

**January-March 2023
QUARTERLY
REPORT**



Report presented to

Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission
101 East Capitol Avenue, Suite 108
Little Rock, AR 72201



Report presented by

Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Evaluation Team
University of Central Arkansas
201 Donaghey Avenue, Conway, AR 72035

August 2023

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ABOUT THE ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION



ATSC Mission

The mission of the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission is to provide oversight and assessment of the performance of the seven programs funded by the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act of 2000. The Act mandates the distribution of Master Settlement Agreement funds. The seven health programs that receive funding work to enhance the health and well-being of Arkansans through various projects, programs, and outreach.

Funded Programs



Arkansas Biosciences Institute

Robert McGehee, Jr., PhD, Director
Jimie Jarry, Program Coordinator

ABI Goal: To develop new tobacco-related medical and agricultural research initiatives to improve the access to new technologies, improve the health of Arkansans, and stabilize the economic security of Arkansas.



UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health

Mark Williams, PhD, Dean
Liz Gates, JD, MPH, Assistant Dean for Planning and Policy

COPH Goal: To improve the health and promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Arkansas through education, research, and service.



Arkansas Minority Health Initiative

Kenya Eddings, MPH, Director

MHI Goal: To improve healthcare systems in Arkansas and access to healthcare delivery systems, thereby resolving critical deficiencies that negatively impact the health of the citizens of the state.



Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program

Lana "Joy" Gray, Branch Chief

TPCP Goal: To reduce morbidity and death associated with tobacco use by preventing initiation of tobacco/nicotine products and providing cessation services/resources to Arkansans who want to quit using tobacco.



Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program

Mary Franklin, Director, Department of Human Services Division of County Operations

TS-MEP Goal: To expand access to healthcare through targeted Medicaid expansions, thereby improving the health of eligible Arkansans.



UAMS Centers on Aging

AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy, PhD, GNP-BC, Director

UAMS-COA Goal: To improve the health of older Arkansans through interdisciplinary geriatric care and innovative education programs and to influence health policy affecting older adults.



UAMS East Regional Campus

Stephanie Loveless, MPH, Director

UAMS East Goal: To recruit and retain healthcare professionals and to provide community-based healthcare and education to improve the health of the people residing in the Delta region.

ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION AND STAFF

Andrea Allen, Commission Chair

Executive Director, A-State Delta Center for Economic Development
Governor Appointee

Jennifer Fowler, Commissioner

Director, Arkansas NSF EPSCoR at Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC)
AEDC Permanent Designee

Jerri Clark, Commissioner

Director of School Health Services, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)
ADE Permanent Designee

Mary Franklin, Commissioner

Director of Divisions of County Operations, Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS)
DHS Permanent Designee

Nick Fuller, Commissioner

Deputy Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)
ADHE Permanent Designee

Ken Knecht, MD, Commissioner

Physician, Arkansas Children's Hospital
Senate President Pro Tempore Appointee

Martha Hill, Commissioner

Counsel
Attorney General Appointee

Renee Mallory, Commissioner

Interim Secretary of Health, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH)
ADH Permanent Designee

Zsanica Ervin, Administrative Specialist III



ARKANSAS TOBACCO SETTLEMENT COMMISSION EVALUATION TEAM

Emily Lane, MFA, PhD(c)

Project Director

Betty Hubbard, EdD, MCHES

Evaluator: Arkansas Biosciences Institute

Marc Sestir, PhD

Evaluator: UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health

Denise Demers, PhD, CHES

Evaluator: Arkansas Minority Health Initiative

Janet Wilson, PhD

Evaluator: Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program

Joseph Howard, PhD

Evaluator: Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program

Ed Powers, PhD

Evaluator: UAMS Centers on Aging

Jacquie Rainey, DrPH, MCHES

Co-PI & Administrator; Evaluator: UAMS East Regional Campus

Rhonda McClellan, EdD

Co-PI

Qualitative Report



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH



ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE (ABI), UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (COPH), ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE (MHI), *TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM (TPCP), TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM (TS-MEP), UAMS CENTERS ON AGING (UAMS-COA), UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS (UAMS EAST)

*TPCP FUNDS UAPB PROGRAMS: GRADUATE ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM (GASP), MINORITY RESEARCH CENTER (MRC), MINORITY SUB-RECIPIENT GRANT OFFICE (MISRGO)

EDUCATION

47,312

EDUCATION ENCOUNTERS

20,471

YOUTH ENCOUNTERS

MHI, TPCP, UAMS-COA, UAMS East



521

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & STUDENTS EDUCATED

ABI, COPH, TPCP, UAMS-COA, UAMS East



24%

OF COPH STUDENTS FROM RURAL AREAS



23

DISTANCE-ACCESSIBLE COURSES OFFERED BY COPH



23

ARKANSANS ENROLLED IN UAMS EAST GOOD FOOD RX PROGRAM



6

GASP STUDENTS RECRUITED



1

GASP GRADUATE



MISRGO held the 20th Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference in partnership with the Arkansas Cancer Coalition's Cancer Summit.

SERVICE



9,054

ARKANSANS SERVED BY TS-MEP



2,685

PATIENT ENCOUNTERS
UAMS-COA, UAMS East



922

ARKANSANS ENROLLED IN SMOKING CESSATION VIA BE WELL ARKANSAS



28

WOMEN ENROLLED IN BE WELL BABY



11,709

EXERCISE ENCOUNTERS
UAMS-COA, UAMS East



3,059

HEALTH SCREENINGS
MHI, UAMS East



475

PAMPHLETS ON DIABETES OR HYPERTENSION MAILED TO BE WELL CALLERS



98

COUNSELING SESSIONS FOR EXPECTANT OR NEW MOTHERS

BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH



ARKANSAS BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE (ABI), UAMS FAY W. BOOZMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (COPH), ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE (MHI), *TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM (TPCP), TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM (TS-MEP), UAMS CENTERS ON AGING (UAMS-COA), UAMS EAST REGIONAL CAMPUS (UAMS EAST)

*TPCP FUNDS UAPB PROGRAMS: GRADUATE ADDICTION STUDIES PROGRAM (GASP), MINORITY RESEARCH CENTER (MRC), MINORITY SUB-RECIPIENT GRANT OFFICE (MISRGO)

RESEARCH

UAMS

Fay W. Boozman
College of Public Health



152

COPH RESEARCH PROJECTS

Ongoing research addresses topics such as violence interventions, treatment of diabetes, maternal and child health, and reduction of chronic disease disparities.



\$389,847

AWARDED TO COPH FOR GREEN SCHOOLYARDS RESEARCH IN LITTLE ROCK

With funds received from the National Institutes of Health to support its role in a collaboration to improve school playgrounds, COPH will be studying how green schoolyards can increase physical activity and improve children's experiences at school.



HIGHLIGHTING ABI RESEARCHER



A-STATE

Sudeepa Bhattacharyya, Ph.D., associate professor of bioinformatics at A-State, describes the two-fold focus of her work: "First, to apply precision medicine to understand the mechanistic underpinnings of major depressive disorder. . . . Second, [my focus] is public health informatics . . . developing data-driven models to address health disparities." In the long term, Bhattacharyya's goals are to understand the pathophysiology and treatment response of mood disorders . . . and to strategize effective interventions in the Delta.

ABI TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO ARKANSAS APCD

Kenley Money, director of information systems for the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement, plans to work with the ABI director to develop applications that will include helpful user tips and online training for all users of the Arkansas All-Payer Claims Database. It is expected that these applications will help resolve access issues.



UAMS-COA PRESENTS AT AMERICAN SOCIETY ON AGING CONFERENCE

The four abstracts selected for the competitive ASA conference in March highlighted the following topics: (1) Dementia training for first responders: A statewide plan and initiative; (2) Effects of drumming programs on actively aging adults; (3) Adapting an exercise evidence-based program to meet needs of rural older adults; and (4) Strategies to address pain reduction among rural older adults during the opioid crisis.



MINORITY RESEARCH CENTER SUPPORTS TOBACCO STUDIES

Currently, the MRC is providing support to two funded projects with the Community Clinic in Northwest Arkansas and Philander Smith College on the topics of utilization of tobacco treatment in a healthcare setting and tobacco use during COVID-19, respectively.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$35 Million

IN CLAIMS PAID BY TS-MEP

\$27 Million

LEVERAGED IN FEDERAL MATCHING FUNDS



\$354,000

Awarded to UAMS-COA by USDA to support virtual-reality-based dementia education



\$22,310

Revenue generated from UAMS East Family Medical Center



\$709,845

Leveraged by UAMS-COA, equal to \$1.46 per ATSC \$1



\$10,000

Grant funds used by UAMS East Lake Village and Chicot Memorial to purchase ultrasound device





BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH

Arkansas Biosciences Institute (ABI), UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH), Arkansas Minority Health Initiative (MHI), *Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (TCP), Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program (TS-MEP), UAMS Centers on Aging (UAMS-COA), UAMS East Regional Campus (UAMS East)

*TCP funds UAPB programs: Graduate Addiction Studies Program (GASP), Minority Research Center (MRC), Minority Sub-Recipient Grant Office (MISRGO)



TESTIMONIALS



Arkansas Biosciences Institute

ABI-funded researcher, Sudeepa Bhattacharyya, associate professor of bioinformatics and data science at A-State, explained, "I was able to start my research career with ABI research funds, and I do really appreciate the opportunities those funds provided to me in starting my research pursuits. . . . Lots of great research work is going on in ABI. . . . A dedicated pool of investigators is doing really exciting and cutting-edge work in plants, animals, as well as in human health."

UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health

Tiffany Haynes, Ph.D., COPH associate professor, shared, "It's important that we're intentional about raising awareness of our programs and how the programs prepare students for meaningful careers in public health. Also, building collaborations with other state universities, and especially historically Black colleges and universities, is critical to both increasing and diversifying our student body and ultimately Arkansas's public health workforce."

Arkansas Minority Health Initiative

A participant at a health screening event shared, "This is the first time I've seen a healthcare professional in my entire adult life. I dropped out of school in the 9th grade because I had to help my family pay the bills." The participant was very appreciative of the screenings and information he received.

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program

Wonder Lowe with the Arkansas Cancer Coalition, a partner and sub-grantee of TCP, described the Brief Tobacco Intervention (BTI) training that the organization offers to health providers, "This training aims to offer strategies on how to work with tobacco users to jointly develop quit plans, to prescribe medications, and to refer patients for lung cancer screenings. In addition, [the training] teaches healthcare providers how to effectively conduct conversations on quitting tobacco and how to code and bill for counseling sessions."

UAMS Centers on Aging

A participant at a dementia workshop shared, "Without your training and expertise, our last six months together would have been so much worse than they were, so I will be forever grateful for all you did to help me. Know how much I appreciated all the special extras you provided and guided me with. You were an invaluable godsend and I will never forget you!"

UAMS East Regional Campus

A participant of a parenting class reflected, "I didn't think that I would learn anything useful, but surprisingly I have learned a lot about how to communicate with my children and how to use positive discipline."

PROGRAM PROGRESS AND EVALUATION



ABI PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The Arkansas Biosciences Institute, the agricultural and biomedical research program of the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act, is a partnership of scientists from Arkansas Children's Research Institute, Arkansas State University, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The ABI supports long-term agricultural and biomedical research at its five member institutions and focuses on fostering collaborative research that connects investigators from various disciplines across these five institutions. The ABI uses this operational approach to address the goals as outlined in the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act. These goals are to conduct:

- Agricultural research with medical implications;
- Bioengineering research that expands genetic knowledge and creates new potential applications in the agricultural-medical fields;
- Tobacco-related research that identifies and applies behavioral, diagnostic, and therapeutic knowledge to address the high level of tobacco-related illnesses in Arkansas;
- Nutritional and other research that is aimed at preventing and treating cancer, congenital and hereditary conditions, or other related conditions; and
- Other areas of developing research that are related or complementary to primary ABI-supported programs.

Program Goal

The goal of the ABI is to develop new tobacco-related medical and agricultural research initiatives to improve the access to new technologies, improve the health of Arkansans, and stabilize the economic security of Arkansas.

ABI EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

Dr. McGehee, ABI director, recently hosted a meeting of the All-Payer Claims Database (APCD) stakeholders to discuss user access issues. The meeting was beneficial, resulting in several suggestions for improvement. Kenley Money, director of information systems for the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI), plans to work with Dr. McGehee to develop applications that will include helpful user tips and online training for all users. This training, that includes a proficiency test, will be required for all new users and the existing users who repeatedly misuse the database. It is expected that these applications will help resolve access issues.

Challenges

The APCD is used by many research investigators who are not properly trained, resulting in access problems with the database. Many users do not understand how to retrieve the data properly which is limiting access by others. Currently, there is little assistance to help with these issues.

Evaluator Comments

Since ABI's inception, scientific investigators have exhibited an ongoing record of research that culminates in publications, presentations, and media contacts. These outreach activities allow ABI researchers from the five programs to disseminate their findings to the public and professionals. As research projects have progressed at ABI, some findings have led to unique intellectual property and commercial applications that were eligible for patent protection. All of these metrics provide evidence of the program's past successes.

In 2020, the rapid response to the research challenges presented by COVID-19 illustrated the commitment ABI researchers were willing and able to make to preserve the health of Arkansans. The diverse nature of the projects generated during the pandemic provided insights into the ability and capacity of investigators to channel their expertise into mitigation, treatment, and prevention of morbidity and mortality caused by the virus.

During this quarter, ABI was able to resume specific focus on the indicators that demonstrate the success of the program even though the COVID-19 virus continues to affect the population in Arkansas. The data on current and ongoing projects for FY 2023 are being collected and will be tabulated, analyzed, and reported at the end of the year.

ABI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

The institute's research results should translate into commercial, alternate technological, and other applications wherever appropriate in order that the research results may be applied to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of any health-related programs in the state. The institute should also obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

- **Indicator:** The five member institutions will continue to rely on funding from extramural sources with the goal of increasing leveraged funding from a baseline of \$3.15 for every \$1.00 in ABI funding.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. During FY22, investigators received \$6.74 in extramural funding for every \$1 provided by the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement. These combined funds are used to support pilot projects, purchase new equipment, gain access to core laboratories, hire critical research technicians, and develop collaborative relationships. Such efforts help build strong preliminary data and provide infrastructure support to ensure the success of extramural grant applications. Extramural funding related to this indicator will be reported at the end of the fiscal year.

- **Indicator:** ABI-funded research will lead to the development of intellectual property, as measured by the number of patents filed and received.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Patent filings and patent awards are key indicators of entrepreneurship, innovation, and potential commercial opportunities at ABI. In FY 2022, there were 10 patent filings and seven patent awards to ABI-supported research investigators. Data collection for this indicator is in progress and will be reported at the end of the fiscal year.

- **Indicator:** The ABI will promote its activities through various media outlets to broaden the scope of impact of its research.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. For FY22, ABI made 56 media contacts that occurred in a variety of formats: 15 newspaper articles, 32 press releases, two news conferences, and seven television/radio broadcasts. These contacts highlight the activities of ABI investigators and also increase the scope and impact of research conducted by this program. Data for this indicator will be reported at the end of FY23.

ABI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Short-Term Objective

The Arkansas Biosciences Institute shall initiate new research programs for the purpose of conducting, as specified in § 19-12-115, agricultural research with medical implications, bioengineering research, tobacco-related research, nutritional research focusing on cancer prevention or treatment, and other research approved by the board.

- **Indicator:** The ABI will allocate funding to its five member institutions to support research, while also monitoring that funded research activities are conducted on time, within scope, and with no overruns.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Data collection is in progress. During FY 2022, research investigators reported 233 new and ongoing research projects covering all five research areas. Funding was also allocated to initiate research start-ups and to maintain ongoing projects by purchasing equipment, updating infrastructure, and providing animal care. Data for this indicator will be reported at the end of the 2023 fiscal year.

- **Indicator:** The ABI and its member institutions will systematically disseminate research results and ensure that at least 290 publications and 370 presentations are delivered each year. These include presentations and publications of results, curricula, and interventions developed using the grant funding, symposia held by investigators, and the creation of new research tools and methodologies that will advance science in the future.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Data reflecting the progress toward achievement of this indicator is in progress. This indicator was not met for FY22 due to COVID-19. Although ABI reported 426 publications, well above the goal of 290, research investigators fell slightly short of the expected number of presentations with 344. Publications by ABI investigators included 287 independent research articles and 134 articles in collaboration with other researchers. ABI reported five new or improved methodologies and research tools developed to advance future scientific endeavors. Data regarding the dissemination of research results and the creation of research tools and methodologies will be reported at the conclusion of the fiscal year.

ABI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** Employment supported by the ABI and extramural funding will be maintained at a baseline of 300 full-time equivalent (FTE) with at least 65% of the FTE supported by extramural funds.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Data reflecting the progress toward achievement of this indicator is in progress. This indicator was not met for FY22 due to the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic. During FY 2022, research investigators indicated 280 FTE jobs were supported by ABI and extramural funding. This number falls slightly below the expectation of 300 FTEs. However, of these 280 jobs, 73% were supported by extramural funding, which exceeded the goal of 65%. Final data for this indicator will be reported at the conclusion of FY 2023.

- **Indicator:** The ABI will facilitate and maintain research collaboration at a level of 20% - 25% among member institutions.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Collection of data related to this indicator is in progress. It should be noted that during the previous fiscal year, there were 233 new and ongoing research projects reported by ABI investigators. Of these projects, 81% were collaborations between scientists at ABI supported institutions. Research activities included a wide range of health-related topics such as metabolic processes, crop performance, childhood obesity, sleep, and cancer prevention. Data related to research collaboration among member institutions will be reported at the end of FY 2023.

ABI TESTIMONIAL

Highlighting ABI-Supported Investigator, Sudeepa Bhattacharyya, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Bioinformatics at Arkansas State University

Sudeepa Bhattacharyya's first research appointment, assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at UAMS, was through the Arkansas Biosciences Institute. She is now on the second stop of her research journey with ABI at Arkansas State University. "I was able to start my research career with ABI research funds, and I do really appreciate the opportunities those funds provided to me in starting my research pursuits," she explained. Currently, Bhattacharyya's appointment is associate professor of bioinformatics and data science, Arkansas Biosciences Institute, and the Department of Biological Sciences, both at Arkansas State University.

Bhattacharyya describes the central focus of her current work at A-State as a two-fold approach: "First, to apply precision medicine to understand the mechanistic underpinnings of major depressive disorder, commonly known as mental depression. Second, [my focus] is public health informatics, through which we are developing data-driven models to address health disparities and inequities." In the long term, Bhattacharyya's goals are to understand the pathophysiology and treatment response of mood disorders, using a precision medicine approach, and to strategize effective interventions using community-academic partnership models for public health issues in the Delta region of Arkansas.

"Lots of great research work is going on in ABI," she emphasized. "A dedicated pool of investigators is doing really exciting and cutting-edge work in plants, animals, as well as in human health." Bhattacharyya hopes the public will come to understand how much ABI is dedicated to promoting and launching the research careers of young investigators in Arkansas, "as well as encouraging inter-institutional, team-based, highly relevant, creative research partnerships."

COPH PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH) educates a public health workforce and advances the health of the public by investigating the causes, treatments, and prevention of human health problems. Preventing chronic disease and promoting positive health behavior is the most effective way to improve the health of all people. The College's mission of improving the health of all Arkansans is realized through teaching and research as well as service to elected officials, agencies, organizations, and communities. Examples of the complex health issues addressed include improving the multiple dimensions of access to healthcare; reducing the preventable causes of chronic disease; controlling infectious diseases; reducing environmental hazards, violence, substance abuse, and injury; and promoting preparedness for health issues resulting from terrorist acts, natural disasters, and newly emerging infectious diseases.

Program Goal

The goal of the COPH is to improve the health and promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Arkansas through education, research, and service.

COPH EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

The UAMS College of Public Health has embraced numerous opportunities throughout the year to enhance its efforts in education, research, and service; many of these opportunities are summarized elsewhere in this report. Highlighted below is a recent opportunity to improve green spaces at Little Rock elementary schools, which is captured by Kev' Moyer (2023), a journalist for the college.

The College of Public Health has received funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support its role in a collaboration to improve school playgrounds in Little Rock. Year one of the 4-year (NIH) grant is for \$389,847. Funding for the following years will be determined by the overall performance of the program.

"This is a great opportunity and speaks to the importance of the work being done to improve schools in our city," said Michael Thomsen, Ph.D., professor in the college's Health Policy and Management Department who holds the Governor Sidney S. McMath Endowed Chair in Obesity Prevention.

The Little Rock Green Schoolyard Initiative is a partnership between the City of Little Rock and the Little Rock School District (LRSD). It is receiving technical assistance from the Children & Nature Network. UAMS joined the effort last year and will be studying how green schoolyards can increase physical activity and improve children's experiences at school. The initial pilot sites are Stephens Elementary and Washington Elementary, both of which are LRSD community schools.

Marvin Burton, principal of Little Rock Metro Vocational High and the district community school program liaison, said community schools can create a sense of neighborhood pride, economic empowerment and — most importantly — serve as an area resource hub. Therefore, this green schoolyard initiative complements the vision the district has for its community schools.

"Quality green spaces can increase the community presence in after school activities and lead to better support of the students, teachers, and staff of the schools," Burton said. "They can also lead to better community policing of the school grounds, and it increases the possibilities of local residents being out and having a good time in nature."

COPH EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities Continued

Priya Cook, director of Green Schoolyards for Healthy Communities for Children & Nature Network, noted how equity-based, green schoolyard programs can improve family bonds and community pride. She also highlighted how the initiative has been successful in cities similar in size to Little Rock.

"Green schoolyard programs expand kids' access to nature, which is important," she said. "The aim is to achieve equitable park access, increase contact with nature, and promote outdoor learning. The program ensures that the transformed spaces remain ideal places for gatherings, recreation, and restoration."

"This is a community-led initiative," said Jennifer Glasgow, chief educational officer for the City of Little Rock. "We value what the community wants to see. We'll use input from students, parents of students, teachers, and people who live in the communities. This project can renew the students' interest in attending school, which makes learning an easier and more enjoyable experience for everyone involved."

The initiative also provides an opportunity to incorporate outdoor experiences into science lessons, Glasgow added. "We want students to have an area where they can have access to great equipment and learn about nature," she said. "The green spaces can help with the students' social-emotional learning. That's another reason why this initiative is so important."

Overall, the initiative emphasizes the use of nature to create a well-rounded environment for students and community members. "As a community gains empowerment, the more likely the community becomes for potential economic development," Burton said. "The more we can garner support from the residents, the more it will enhance the pride in the community and support for the school. That sets the stage to revitalize a community. That all feeds into supporting the students and their academic success."

"The NIH is the nation's premier biomedical research agency. The fact that they are interested in what is happening in Little Rock is a real compliment to the good work taking place in our city," Thomsen said. "Our study will show how green schoolyards affect physical activity and will help us understand how these kinds of initiatives improve community health."

COPH EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Challenges

The college is restarting the strategic planning process that originally began in 2020 and paused due to the pandemic. Developing a strategic plan is, by definition, intensive and requires in depth examination of most aspects of the college. It will also require significant data collection and analysis prior to starting to draft the plan itself. The process is expected to take approximately 12 months.

Evaluator Comments

The COPH is on track to meet all of its annual goals. Faculty and students continue to secure research grants and implement research projects, nearly always in Arkansas and relevant to Arkansas public health. COPH members are prominent in service roles focusing on health, in both professional and lay settings; and the COPH makes health-related courses and talks widely available to the public via Internet access.

COPH INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

Elevate the overall ranking of the health status of Arkansans.

- **Indicator:** Through consultations, partnerships and dissemination of knowledge, the COPH serves as an educational resource for Arkansans (e.g., general public, public health practitioners and researchers, and policymakers) with the potential to affect public health practice and policy – and population health.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Fifty-two activities were reported by faculty, covering a wide range of educational contributions. Thirty-eight had statewide audiences, eight a national scope, and six focused on Central Arkansas. These activities included presentations to professional, nonprofessional, and public audiences; service as consultants and contributors to health-related committees, task forces, and expert panels; and partnerships with public health practitioners and health-related community groups.

- **Indicator:** COPH faculty productivity is maintained at a level of two publications in peer-reviewed journals per one full-time equivalent (FTE) employee for primary research faculty.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Data for this indicator are reported in the October–December quarter and will be presented in the 2022–23 biennial report.

- **Indicator:** Research conducted by COPH faculty and students contributes to public health practice, public health research, and the health and well-being of Arkansans.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. In the January–March quarter, faculty engaged in 129 grants and research projects, 125 (or 97%) of which were based in and/or focused on Arkansas. Students engaged in an additional 23 projects, all of which were based in and/or focused on Arkansas. Ongoing research addresses a wide variety of health-related topics, including violence interventions, treatment of diabetes, maternal and child health, and reduction of chronic disease disparities.

- **Indicator:** COPH faculty, staff, and students are engaged in research that is based in Arkansas.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Currently, a large majority (148 of 152, 97%) of research projects are based in Arkansas.

COPH INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The COPH makes courses and presentations available statewide.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. During this quarter, 23 distance-accessible courses were made available statewide. Additionally, five professional presentations were made available statewide on topics such as Arkansas children's health, tuberculosis, and care of elderly adults with dementia.

- **Indicator:** Twenty percent of enrolled students at the COPH come from rural areas of Arkansas.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Of 291 students enrolled in the COPH during the January-March quarter, 70 (or 24%) were from rural areas of Arkansas.

- **Indicator:** COPH graduates' race/ethnicity demographics for Whites, African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos are reflective of Arkansas race/ethnicity demographics.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. These data are reported in the April-June, July-September, and October-December quarters.

- **Indicator:** The majority of COPH alumni stay in Arkansas and work in public health.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. These data are reported in the April-June, July-September, and October-December quarters.

Short-Term Objective

Obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

- **Indicator:** The COPH shall maintain a 1.5:1 ratio of total annual fiscal year extramural award funding to annual fiscal year tobacco settlement dollars.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Data and evaluation of this indicator are reported in the July-September quarterly report.

COPH TESTIMONIAL

COPH Team Members Recruit UAPB Biology Club Students

The UAMS COPH has conducted substantial community outreach over the past quarter. Testimonials from one of those outreach efforts, a recruitment event at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, are summarized below by Kev' Moyer (2023), a journalist for the college. For the purpose of this report, we have provided a truncated summary of Moyer's work.

The College of Public Health partnered with the UAPB's Biology Club to host a special recruitment event. More than 40 members of the club attended the program, which took place in a UAPB auditorium.

"Most students are not aware of the educational and career opportunities available in public health," said Tiffany Haynes, Ph.D., COPH associate professor. "It's important that we're intentional about raising awareness of our programs and how the programs prepare students for meaningful careers in public health. Also, building collaborations with other state universities, and especially historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), is critical to both increasing and diversifying our student body and ultimately Arkansas's public health workforce."

The program featured presentations, a question-and-answer session, and an opportunity to get exclusive COPH pamphlets. In addition to Haynes, representatives from the college were Lorraine Stigar, MPH, director of recruitment and student life cycle; Austin Porter, Dr.P.H., MPH, assistant professor; and Alice Gardner, MPH, Ph.D., doctoral student. Amanda Winston, MPH, an education coordinator with UAMS and an alumna of the college, also spoke to the group, which consisted of mostly biology, chemistry or biochemistry majors.

"I strongly encourage each of you to research the college," Winston told the students. "I'm well-versed in numerous concepts of public health because of the education I received at the UAMS College of Public Health."

When organizing the event, Stigar knew it was imperative to include Black faculty and students from the college. "When recruiting, I always tell students, 'Go look at the faculty. Go look at their research. Do you see yourself there?'" Stigar said. "These are important questions to ask, especially when looking at pursuing a masters or doctoral degree because the instructors and students are who you'll spend a lot of time with."

COPH TESTIMONIAL

Porter enjoyed having the opportunity to help increase those numbers. "Many undergraduates do not have a true understanding of public health and everything it includes," he said. "However, we were able to provide those students with some valuable information. As an alum and faculty member of the COPH, I'm committed to our success and a big component of that is recruiting." Having an increase in African-American students in the college is helpful for all Arkansans, Porter added. "The diversity of thought and experiences are beneficial to the overall learning experience" he said. "Another benefit is that this will ensure a more diverse public health workforce, which creates a more diverse collection of public health leaders. That's a win-win for everybody."

Stigar said a number of students had more questions about the college. "I had several students ask me about the programs, how we got to this point, what we do with our research, and how they can learn more about the 4+1 program," she said. "Hearing from faculty and a doctoral student helped the Biology Club understand that there are opportunities for continued education beyond health legacy programs like medicine and pharmacy."

The students also received info about the Arkansas HBCU Scholarship, which supports MPH students' effort to reduce health disparities in Arkansas. Additionally, they learned about the UAMS HBCU Med Track Programs. The students also received info about the college's Stead Scholars program, which is an eight-week, paid, public health internship.

Gardner enjoyed sharing her journey to becoming a doctoral student. She also liked how the Biology Club members, and the organization's sponsors, wanted to know more about the college's curriculums. "I felt honored that they were so receptive and engaged. Our presentations piqued some interest. I had great conversations with some of the students about COPH programs and how public health can really tie into any career path that they might be considering. It was definitely a productive event."

Since the program, Haynes has received numerous emails from UAPB students wanting to learn more about the college. The students finding out what public health is, the college itself, and the opportunities affiliated with it — made the program a success, according to Winston. "My hope is that seeing people who look like them as examples of public health researchers and practitioners will encourage the students to consider an education and career in public health," Haynes said.

"I wanted those students to realize that there's an opportunity to connect with the population on a deeper level — through a public health education," Porter said. "Having more African Americans in the realm of public health can increase the solutions to health barriers associated with our community."



MHI PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The Arkansas Minority Health Initiative (MHI) was established in 2001 through Initiated Act I to administer the Targeted State Needs for screening, monitoring, and treating hypertension, strokes, and other disorders disproportionately critical to minority groups in Arkansas by 1) increasing awareness, 2) providing screening or access to screening, 3) developing intervention strategies (including educational programs) and developing/maintaining a database. To achieve this goal, the MHI's focus is on addressing existing disparities in minority communities, educating these communities on diseases that disproportionately impact them, encouraging healthier lifestyles, promoting awareness of services and accessibility within our current healthcare system, and collaborating with community partners.

Program Goal

The goal of the MHI is to improve healthcare systems in Arkansas and access to healthcare delivery systems, thereby resolving critical deficiencies that negatively impact the health of the citizens of the state.



MHI EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

The MHI continues to capitalize upon the topics and issues that are most important to its priority population. Additionally, the agency takes advantage of every possible educational and screening outlet including new opportunities related to the pandemic, social media campaigns and live events, the Mobile Health Unit (MHU), and strong efforts to reach more people through multimedia outlets as well as working with new partnerships each quarter. In all, the MHI partnered with 11 organizations and municipalities this quarter. Some of the agency's new partnerships have opened doors for additional activities. These new partnerships include UAMS Culinary Medicine Department, Shorter College, City of Wrightsville, and Arkansas Baptist College.

Challenges

Heart disease continues to be a paramount challenge as the number one cause of death for minority Arkansans, and the MHI continues to fight the battle with its strong awareness campaign via media outlets and in-person education and screening events. However, three more acute challenges exist. First, the weather can sometimes present a challenge at screening events that take place outdoors, as certain weather conditions make the machines inoperable from time to time. Also, the MHU needed repairs this quarter, which halted some screening processes. The final challenge was a hiring freeze in January 2023, which seems to be the most pressing and hardest to overcome. At present, the MHI is without the following positions (all of which play an important role in the success of the organization): Media Specialist, Nurse, Grants Manager, and Fiscal Support Analyst. The shortage of people in these positions has caused other individuals to take up the slack, which overburdens them. Although this has drastically slowed down the work and outreach in the communities that MHI serves, the agency remains a significant presence throughout the state, maintaining its screening, educational encounters, and media campaigns.

Evaluator Comments

Throughout the quarter, MHI continued its fruitful outreach efforts and has sustained robust numbers in all media categories, offering thousands of Arkansans the opportunity to gain crucial information regarding overall health, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, breastfeeding, mental health, and COVID-19, among other topics. Also, the MHI has taken advantage of efforts to provide screenings and education related to tobacco use and unhealthy lifestyles. The agency continues to see growth in its programs, exceeding expectations to meet the goal related to health screening and educational encounters. Utilization of the MHU has also helped the agency's efforts to raise awareness through education and screening efforts. In all, the MHI continues to provide vital services and information that will help minority Arkansans reduce death/disability due to tobacco, chronic, and other lifestyle-related illnesses.



MHI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

Reduce death/disability due to tobacco, chronic, and other lifestyle-related illnesses of Arkansans.

■ **Indicator:** The MHI will raise awareness and provide access to screenings for disorders disproportionately critical to minorities as well as to any citizen within the state regardless of racial/ethnic group, as measured by the number of health screenings, educational encounters, counties reached, as well as efforts related to multimedia outreach.

- **Progress:** On Track

- **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the fiscal year goal. The MHI continues its robust campaign to raise awareness and provide access to screenings throughout Arkansas. Along with its efforts to raise awareness, the MHI also offers education and provides screenings to minority Arkansans. Compared to this time last year, screening numbers are similar and the agency continues to work with partners throughout the state to raise awareness regarding disorders disproportionately critical to minority Arkansans. MHI continues to work with many different partners to further the health of minority Arkansans. Some of the partnerships this quarter included the Tri-County Rural Health Network, Arkansas Human Development Corporation, Community First Alliance, AR Food Banks, and Team Summit. This quarter they added four new partners (UAMS Culinary Medicine Department, Shorter College, City of Wrightsville, and Arkansas Baptist College).

- The number of screenings has increased during the fiscal year. Additionally, each quarter, MHI has been able to increase the ways in which the program raises awareness with educational literature, media campaigns (social media, TV, and radio), screening events with partners, and through MHU events. With these additions, the agency was able to provide health education and materials to over 650 attendees for a total of 2,261 health screenings. The MHU events provided over half to the total screenings (1,782 of 2,261) with participation in 38 counties. Moreover, through multiple television stations in central and northwest Arkansas, the MHI tallied 1,265 television commercials on health-related topics, with 572 specific to tobacco ("Tobacco Pledge"). The MHI's social media influence remained strong with hundreds of thousands of impressions on Facebook, Twitter, and over-the-top streaming ads.

MHI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Short-Term Objective

Prioritize the list of health problems and planned interventions for minority populations and increase the number of Arkansans screened and treated for tobacco, chronic, and lifestyle related illnesses.

- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to stroke awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
 - **Progress:** Exceeding Expectations
 - **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations towards the annual goal. A steady increase in screenings has been achieved and the MHI to work toward its screening goals with an additional 442 blood pressure screenings this quarter. Furthermore, the MHI educated more than 650 Arkansans this quarter through events and educational literature. Also, specific to stroke awareness, the MHI ran 1,265 television commercials encouraging exercise and abstaining from tobacco. The MHI is well positioned to fulfill this indicator.

- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to hypertension awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
 - **Progress:** Exceeding Expectations
 - **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations toward the fiscal year goal. Hypertension is an increase in blood pressure and the MHI provided 442 blood pressure screenings this quarter. Over 650 Arkansans were provided education and/or educational literature related to hypertension. Additionally, MHI ran 1,265 television commercials that encourage viewers to eat healthy and exercise, and highlighted two activities that will help to keep blood pressure at a healthy level. The commercials also added encouragement to viewers to have their numbers checked via the MHU. Eight stations in Central and Northwest Arkansas ran these commercials.

- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to heart disease awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
 - **Progress:** Exceeding Expectations
 - **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations. The agency provided 376 cholesterol screenings with over 650 educational encounters. Furthermore, 1,265 television commercials ran that focused on heart disease prevention by encouraging exercise and quitting smoking.

MHI INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The MHI will maintain the number of health screenings and educational encounters related to diabetes awareness for minority Arkansans within a 10% variation of the previous fiscal year.
 - **Progress:** Exceeding Expectations
 - **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations. During this quarter, MHI focused heavily on diabetes awareness. One way it exceeded expectations toward this goal was by airing 1,265 television commercials that encouraged exercise and illustrated the importance of knowing your glucose numbers. The agency also provided 453 glucose screenings with approximately 650 educational encounters in 38 Arkansas counties.

- **Indicator:** The MHI will conduct ongoing needs assessments to determine the most critical minority health needs to target, including implementation of a comprehensive survey of racial and ethnic minority disparities in health and healthcare every five years.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. A formal survey of racial and ethnic minority disparities is conducted every five years and will be completed in FY24. As always, the MHI continues to put efforts forward to provide education to minority Arkansans through various media outlets. This quarter, the program focused its social media messaging on COVID-19 and vaccination, the Southern Ain't Fried Sundays program, the importance of "knowing your numbers", stroke awareness, HIV, and diabetes. Combined, these topics garnered more impressions than last quarter, as well as the previous fiscal year. Those numbers include 11,155 on Twitter, 168,279 on Facebook, and over 300,000 over-the-top streaming impressions.

- **Indicator:** The MHI will develop and implement at least one pilot project every five years to identify effective strategies to reduce health disparities among Arkansans.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. Planning for Camp iCan is underway. It will involve a three-day program with activities, workshops, and exercises that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and self-confidence. Workshops will equip campers with the necessary tools to understand and combat key risk behaviors that lead to unhealthy lifestyles. Further information will come in a future evaluation report.



MHI TESTIMONIAL

Praise for Health Screening Event

In February, a health screening and food pantry event was held at Owensville Baptist Church in Lonsdale. The event drew several participants who received screenings for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight. After receiving free screenings, one participant shared with the director of the agency, "This is the first time I've seen a healthcare professional in my entire adult life. I dropped out of school in the 9th grade because I had to help my family pay the bills." The participant was very appreciative of the screenings and information he received.

TPCP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (TPCP) includes community and school education prevention programs, enforcement of youth tobacco control laws, tobacco cessation programs, health communications, and awareness campaigns. The TPCP also sponsors statewide tobacco control programs that involve youth to increase local coalition activities, tobacco-related disease prevention programs, minority initiatives and monitoring, and evaluation. The TPCP follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Best Practices for Tobacco Control 2014 as a guide for program development. Outcomes achieved by Arkansas's TPCP include reducing disease, disability, and death related to tobacco use by preventing initial use of tobacco by young people, promoting quitting, eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke, and educating Arkansans about the deleterious health effects of tobacco use.

Program Goal

The goal of TPCP is to reduce morbidity and death associated with tobacco use by preventing initiation of tobacco/nicotine products and providing cessation services/resources to Arkansans who want to quit using tobacco.

TPCP EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

TPCP reports that, this quarter, there was a significant increase in the number of presentations provided and attendees present due, in part, to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in many areas of the state. Additional information on a few key activities during this quarter are provided below:

- Hometown Health Improvement (HHI) conducted 95 trainings in January, 71 in February, and 185 in March. A total of 7,194 youth and college-aged students participated in presentations on vaping, while 2,626 youth in grades K-3 watched the Coral's Reef video presentation.
- Project Prevent held several meetings: Next Generation (one meeting with 25 attendees), Project Prevent chapter meetings (148 meetings with 2,277 attendees), and statewide meetings (three meetings with 616 attendees). Also, Project Prevent is accepting submissions for the Drawing for A Difference and My Reason to Write events from January 2 to April 7.
- Arkansas Tobacco Education Initiative (ARTEI) has made connections with the Cabot Rotary Club to present on the topic of vaping for adults, and ARTEI joined the Russellville Chamber of Commerce and the Dardanelle Chamber of Commerce. This makes it easier to find out about local events in which they can participate. Connections made through Arkansas Cancer Coalition meetings have increased opportunities for ARTEI to share information about their Low Dose Cancer Screenings target.
- TPCP held a virtual Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) Training February 13-17. There were 44 attendees.

Challenges

TPCP subgrantees reported a couple of challenges this quarter as they work to offer a variety of presentations to a wide audience. First, the Arkansas Department of Health HHI representatives reported that, based on feedback from presenters, they think that the vaping presentation for ages 4-6 and grades 5th-8th would be more attention-grabbing for that audience if it also had some videos available for it. The PowerPoints are difficult to hold the attention of that age group. Thus, the TPCP subgrantees report they will review the PowerPoints to determine what can be changed or incorporated into the presentations to keep the attention of these youth. Additionally, ARTEI representatives report that some of the schools they visit do not have proper facilities that include a space that is big enough or an available projector to use. While they work with the resources provided, in the future they will be more proactive to coordinate with the school for the proper space and equipment needs. Finally, ARTEI representatives report it is hard to find places to present information concerning Low Dose Cancer Screenings. They report they will continue to make connections at booth events and health fairs to schedule the Low Dose Cancer Screening presentations.

TPCP EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Evaluator Comments

The debilitating impact of COVID-19 restrictions seems to be lessening at this time for TPCP and the UAPB agencies GASP, MISRGO, and MRC. When asked to comment on whether COVID-19 continues to limit programming and other activities, agency contacts for TPCP, and the GASP, MISRGO, and MRC stated that for the current quarter, fewer COVID-19 challenges could be identified. This does not mean that COVID-19 restrictions are completely absent; rather, these agencies have been able to return to “normal” in-person activities while retaining the useful tools developed from responding to the COVID-19 restrictions, such as electronic access to information and virtual trainings/conferences.

TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

Survey data will demonstrate a reduction in numbers of Arkansans who smoke and/or use tobacco.

- **Indicator:** By June 2025, the TPCP will work to decrease the current smoking/smokeless tobacco/Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) use rate among youth (grades 9–12) from 13.7% to 11.7% for smoking, from 12.7% to 11.7% for smokeless tobacco, and from 13.9% to 12.9% for ENDS.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the long-term goal. Although COVID-19 restrictions have lessened recently, the pandemic, historically, has had an impact on the ability of TPCP and its partners to have direct contact with youth in grades 9–12. An annual summary of progress towards this goal will be provided in the fourth quarter of FY23.

- **Indicator:** By June 2025, 1) the TPCP will work to decrease smoking use among adults (18+) from 22.3% to 20.3%, 2) decrease ENDS use among adults (18+) from 5.7% to 3.7%, and 3) decrease the pregnancy smoking rate from 13.9% to 11.9%.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the long-term goal. Although COVID-19 restrictions have lessened recently, the pandemic, previously, has had an impact on the ability of TPCP and its partners to have direct contact with adults and pregnant women. An annual summary of progress towards this goal will be provided in the fourth quarter of FY23.

- **Indicator:** By June 2025, the number of comprehensive smoke-free/tobacco-free policies will increase from 219 to 400.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track towards the long-term goal. Although COVID-19 restrictions have lessened recently, the pandemic, historically, has had an impact on the ability of TPCP and its partners to have direct contact with communities, businesses, housing sectors, and others in addressing smoke-free/tobacco-free policies. An annual summary of progress towards this goal will be provided in the fourth quarter of FY23.

TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Short-Term Objective

Communities shall establish local tobacco prevention initiatives.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, 500 presentations will be conducted to educate the public and decision makers on the economic burden of tobacco use, current and emerging tobacco/nicotine products, implementing smoke-free/tobacco-free policies, and dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke.

 - **Progress:** Met Ahead of Schedule, Ongoing
 - **Activity:** This indicator has been met. During the first three quarters of FY23, a total of 501 presentations were conducted for 21,111 attendees. In this quarter, 416 presentations were made to 18,911 attendees. Community sub-grantees offered 184 presentations (with 7,423 attendees). Topics included the economic burden of tobacco use, current and emerging tobacco/nicotine products, dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke and strategies for decreasing exposure, Coral's Reef, and vaping. Statewide sub-grantees conducted 232 presentations with 11,488 attendees. Additional details are available in the Opportunities section.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, maintain the sales to minor violations at 6.5% or below (Baseline in FY19 = 6.3%).

 - **Progress:** In Need of Improvement
 - **Activity:** This indicator is in need of improvement. At the end of FY22, the sales to minor non-compliance rate was 11.63% (almost twice the pre-COVID-19 rate of 6.3% in FY19). However, in the first quarter of FY23, there was a significant decrease in the rate to 8.27%. Since then, the rate has been slowly increasing again to 8.81% in the second quarter of FY23 and now to 10.16% in the current quarter. The Arkansas Tobacco Control (ATC), this quarter, conducted 1,633 unannounced compliance checks (and zero behind-the-counter compliance checks) with 166 sales to minor violations. No retailer training was conducted this quarter.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, Project Prevent will establish seven new school chapters within the Red Counties (Red Counties are those counties with low life expectancy).

 - **Progress:** In Need of Improvement
 - **Activity:** This indicator is in need of improvement. While the goal of this indicator is to establish seven new school chapters within Red Counties, only one has been created during the second quarter of FY23. This chapter was registered in Cleveland County at Rison High School on December 7, 2022. It has five chapter members. Although no Red County chapters were added this quarter, Project Prevent continues to facilitate statewide meetings with attendees. Additional details are provided in the Opportunities section.

TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, ADH Health Communication will maintain a comprehensive, multiplatform media plan to prevent youth initiation, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, and promote cessation. (Report Annually)

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. The media plan is reported annually; therefore, an update will be provided in the fourth quarter for FY23.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, Be Well Arkansas will consistently maintain a tobacco cessation quit rate higher than the previous baseline level of 28% for those enrolled in the program. (Report Quarterly: # of callers requesting service; # of callers enrolled in tobacco cessation counseling {Reset Annually})

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. During the current quarter, Be Well Arkansas (BWA) received 1,572 calls inquiring about tobacco cessation, hypertension, and/or diabetes. A total of 922 individuals enrolled in the tobacco cessation program. Additionally, the BWA Call Center mailed out 133 diabetes and 342 hypertension pamphlets as requested by callers. The quit rate will be reported annually in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, provide quarterly updates on the implementation of the Be Well Baby program.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. For the current quarter, 28 women enrolled in the Be Well Baby program, with eight completing the postpartum sessions. A total of 98 counseling sessions were conducted during the quarter (including both prenatal and postpartum sessions for previous enrollees). Be Well Baby provides enrolled participants a total of four prenatal and six postpartum counseling sessions. Finally, 45 educational packets of Be Well Baby information were mailed out to healthcare professionals.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, the MISRGO will work with five new faith-based churches/organizations to implement No Menthol Sunday (NMS) activities.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. The No Menthol Sunday event is scheduled to take place in the fourth quarter. Plans have been made with Holy Temple Cathedral to be the lead institution for the activities. The No Menthol Sunday event is of particular importance this year since many houses of worship have returned to “normal” in-person services, without some abbreviated version due to COVID-19.

TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, the MISRGO will execute an annual event that supports the mission of the program and report on funded and non-funded attendees.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. The 20th Clearing the Air Conference was held virtually on March 8th in partnership with the Arkansas Cancer Coalition's Cancer Summit which was held March 7th. This partnership is in its fourth year and has been beneficial to both organizations. Although these meetings were not held in-person, the decision to go virtual was an effort to increase access for a wider range of participants, as well as in response to positive feedback about previous virtual offerings, rather than being due to strict COVID-19 restrictions. Early evaluation reports reveal participants valued their experience:
 - Overall, how satisfied were you with the speakers/presenters?
 - 99.0% responded very satisfied/satisfied.
 - Overall, how would you rate this event?
 - 90.5% responded excellent/above average.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, the MISRGO will provide and report on technical assistance through direct stakeholders and property owners regarding reducing tobacco related disparities in Arkansas.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. MISRGO reports they continue to provide assistance to stakeholders and serve as a resource in the community. One example is their continued partnership with the Lupus Foundation in helping to make their events (business locations) tobacco-free. Additionally, they have pivoted to work with schools in an effort to update its campus policies to include vaping. Part of the service MISRGO provides is to provide resources to schools and youth serving organizations to discuss vaping and the use of electronic cigarettes.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, the MRC will distribute requests for proposals (RFP) to fund research studies focused on: 1) Tobacco cessation among African-American women tobacco users, 2) Tobacco use among minority groups in a time of COVID-19, and 3) Tobacco and opioid use among minority youth and young adults.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the fiscal year goal. Currently, the MRC is providing support to two funded projects. Support is provided to the Community Clinic in Northwest Arkansas and Philander Smith College on the topics of utilization of tobacco treatment in a healthcare setting and tobacco use during COVID-19, respectively.

TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, the MRC will conduct three virtual and/or face-to-face meetings in minority communities to discuss tobacco usage among minority groups.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The MRC partners with the MISRGO to conduct meetings in the community. Plans are underway to implement the Hate the Vape Tour in schools. The MRC is currently administering pre- and post-assessments of the content with the MISRGO. This virtual event will take place in Arkansas schools in the spring. It will feature Daniel Ament who received a double-lung transplant due to the damage done as a result of his vaping.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, the MRC will submit three open editorials to small town newspapers focusing on tobacco-related issues in rural communities in Arkansas.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The MRC worked with its media partner (Design Group) to develop op-eds on the topics of pregnancy and tobacco use, tobacco products and opioids, vaping and menthol-flavoring, and thirdhand smoke. The op-eds are slated to be distributed in April during Minority Health Month.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, GASP faculty and staff will report the number of new students recruited into their program, the number of students who have graduated from the program, and the number of students who have been provided a stipend.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The GASP recruited six new students to the program during the third quarter of FY23. Four stipends in the amount of \$950 per stipend were awarded to students during this quarter. One student graduated from the GASP during this quarter.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, GASP faculty will identify programs interested in initiating tobacco prevention curriculum for juvenile justice programs in Jefferson County, Arkansas.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. In the second quarter, a needs assessment was conducted of local juvenile justice programs to identify those interested in initiating a tobacco prevention curriculum. The Jefferson County Juvenile Detention Center expressed interest. This quarter, a literature review was conducted by GASP faculty and students to determine the availability of evidence-based tobacco prevention curricula with documented success in juvenile justice settings which could be adopted at the Jefferson County Juvenile Detention Center. The literature review did not provide any appropriate or relevant evidence-based curricula that matched the needs of this agency. A prevention model that is appropriate for the Jefferson County facility will need to be developed. This is the reported next step of this goal.

TPCP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, GASP faculty will explore the possibility of a learning partnership between Be Well Arkansas Quit Tobacco Program and the GASP students.

 - **Progress:** Met
 - **Activity:** The goal was met during FY22 when two meetings were held to discuss GASP student observation of the Be Well Arkansas Quit Tobacco Program workings. Additionally, the GASP faculty met in August 2022 (during the first quarter of FY23) to set programmatic goals for the 2022-2023 academic year. In response to requests from the UAPB community, GASP faculty have prioritized focus on the development of three virtual presentations to share with the UAPB community. Two presentations will focus on tobacco and nicotine health hazards and cessation resources, while the other will focus on health hazards and addiction symptoms of marijuana use. Since the original FY22 goal has been met, and the programmatic focus of GASP has shifted for the current academic year, we will request an update of this indicator at a future ATSC meeting. During the current quarter, GASP faculty, staff, and students discussed initial ideas for content and delivery of the three virtual presentations. Their next step will be to begin meeting with UAPB stakeholders to discuss the virtual presentations' content and delivery.

- **Indicator:** By June 2023, GASP faculty and staff will develop an alumni survey addressing employment and credentials earned since graduation as well as GASP strengths, weaknesses, and areas for potential growth in substance use workforce development. Quarterly reports will highlight progress on the creation, administration, and evaluation of this survey.

 - **Progress:** Met
 - **Activity:** The goal was met during FY22 when GASP developed and administered an alumni survey (see previous reports for additional information). Returned surveys indicate the GASP program is closely aligned with current jobs in the field and helped the former students become competitive in their career. Since the original FY22 goal has been met, a request to delete this indicator was submitted to the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission on February 7th. The Commission will vote on this request at their April 12th quarterly meeting.

TPCP TESTIMONIAL

Highlighting the Importance of Brief Tobacco Intervention Training

The Arkansas Cancer Coalition (ACC) is a partner and sub-grantee of ADH TPCP. Each year the ACC receives funds for various programs and initiatives, including Brief Tobacco Intervention (BTI) training for healthcare providers. During this quarter, the ACC held its spring training in early February with 38 providers participating from 18 organizations covering 10 counties in the state. The spring training had more than three times the number of participants than the 2022 fall training, another sign of a waning pandemic.

Wonder Lowe, MPA, BSHE, TTS with the ACC described the BTI training, "These trainings are geared to providing new skill sets, solutions, and sharing best practices on evidence-based cessation techniques. BTI provides training in the areas of pharmacotherapy, motivational interviewing, low dose CT screening, and coding and billing for tobacco cessation counseling." Lowe continued, "This training aims to offer strategies on how to work with tobacco users to jointly develop quit plans, to prescribe medications, and to refer patients for lung cancer screenings. In addition, [the training] teaches healthcare providers how to effectively conduct conversations on quitting tobacco and how to code and bill for counseling sessions."

Lowe reported that the ideal target audience includes "physicians, physician's assistants, nurses, pharmacists, wellness managers, nutritionists, respiratory therapists, dental professionals, social workers, community health professionals, and cancer and tobacco control advocates." Continued education credits and certificates are also available to a variety of healthcare providers, social workers, and others.

TS-MEP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program (TS-MEP) is a separate and distinct component of the Arkansas Medicaid Program that improves the health of Arkansans by expanding healthcare coverage and benefits to targeted populations. The program works to expand Medicaid coverage and benefits in four populations:

- Population one expands Medicaid coverage and benefits to pregnant women with incomes ranging from 138–200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL);
- Population two expands inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits to adults aged 19–64;
- Population three expands non-institutional coverage and benefits to seniors age 65 and over;
- Population four expands medical assistance, home and community-based services, and employment supports for eligible adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Tobacco Settlement funds are also used to pay the state share required to leverage federal Medicaid matching funds.

Program Goal

The goal of the TS-MEP is to expand access to healthcare through targeted Medicaid expansions, thereby improving the health of eligible Arkansans.

TS-MEP EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

With the TS-MEP program, the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) provides support for the four TS-MEP populations as well as the state's overall Medicaid efforts. The DHS has had the legislative authority for over fifteen years to use any savings in the TS-MEP programs to provide funding for traditional Medicaid. These savings are not used to provide any funding for the Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME) program. As the state of Arkansas continues to explore opportunities for Medicaid reform, new possibilities for using TS-MEP funds may emerge.

Challenges

As a result of the implementation of the ARHOME program, traditional Medicaid expenditures have decreased. Many Medicaid-eligible adults aged 19-64 are covered by the ARHOME program and receive their coverage through Qualified Health Plans in the individual insurance market. Arkansas Medicaid pays the monthly insurance premiums for the majority of these individuals. For the TS-MEP populations, Pregnant Women Expansion was expected to significantly decline as individuals are provided health coverage outside of the TS-MEP. As of now, successful performance has been measured by growth in the number of participants in the TS-MEP initiatives. The Arkansas DHS may need to continue to explore new performance measurements for the TS-MEP initiatives as individuals are transitioning into new coverage groups.

Evaluator Comments

The TS-MEP has been impacted by the significant changes in the healthcare system. The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced all populations served through TS-MEP. With many elective medical procedures being placed on temporary hold at the beginning of the pandemic, there was a decrease in claims as individuals delayed seeking treatment. This may explain the increase in the number of seniors served by the ARSeniors program as more procedures become available. There was also an increase in the number of persons with developmental disabilities being served this quarter. Additionally, the extending of health coverage during the public health emergency can possibly explain the decreases that have been seen in the Pregnant Women Expansion population during this quarter. Since coverage is only being terminated due to death, moving out of the state, incarceration, or at the request of the client, there has been less need to apply for coverage specifically for pregnancy. The Hospital Benefit Coverage (HBC) population has had a significant overall decrease during the public health emergency. The Arkansas DHS suspended cost share requirements for day one hospitalizations as DHS works to implement guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services with changes across the eligibility and claims management systems during the public health emergency. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of persons needing to use the HBC.

TS-MEP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

Demonstrate improved health and reduce long-term health costs of Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

■ **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will demonstrate improved health and reduced long-term health costs of Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

- **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
- **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. With the implementation of the ARHOME program, more individuals will have health coverage beyond the TS-MEP initiatives. Therefore, the TS-MEP long-term impact will be limited compared to the influences outside of the TS-MEP. During this quarter, the TS-MEP provided expanded access to health benefits and services for 9,054 eligible pregnant women, seniors, qualified adults, and persons with developmental disabilities. This is an increase of 250 persons served over the previous quarter. Total claims paid for the TS-MEP populations this reporting period were nearly \$35 million. Additionally, TS-MEP funds are also used to pay the state share required to leverage approximately 70% federal Medicaid matching funds. This amounted to more than \$27 million in federal matching Medicaid funds during this quarter, which has a significant impact on health costs and health outcomes for the state of Arkansas.

Short-Term Objective

The Arkansas Department of Human Services will demonstrate an increase in the number of new Medicaid eligible persons participating in the expanded programs.

■ **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the number of pregnant women with incomes ranging from 138-214% of the FPL enrolled in the Pregnant Women Expansion.

- **Progress:** In Need of Improvement, Influenced by COVID-19
- **Activity:** This indicator is in need of improvement to meet the annual goal. During this quarter, there were 710 participants in the TS-MEP initiative Pregnant Women Expansion (PWE) program. This is a decrease of 149 women being served from the previous quarter. This reduction may be due to the extended health coverage for pregnant women in other categories during the public health emergency. The TS-MEP continues to provide vital services to thousands of pregnant women each year. This program provides prenatal health services for pregnant women with incomes ranging from 138-214% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Before the TS-MEP funding, the income limit for pregnant women was at or below 100% FPL. In this quarter, the TS-MEP funds for the Pregnant Women Expansion program totaled \$709,076.

TS-MEP INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the average number of adults aged 19–64 years receiving inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits through the Hospital Benefit Coverage.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. This quarter, the Hospital Benefit Coverage (HBC) program provided inpatient and outpatient hospital reimbursements and benefits to 653 adults aged 19–64. This is a slight increase of 17 adults served over the previous quarter. Overall, the HBC program has had a significant decrease during the pandemic, which is due to suspended cost share requirements for day one hospitalizations. Traditional Medicaid covered 20 hospital days a year for qualified adults. The HBC program has increased the number of days from 20 to 24 and reduced the copay on the first day of hospitalization from 22% to 10%; though, this has been suspended as noted. TS-MEP funds for the HBC totaled \$3,911,311 in this quarter.

- **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the average number of persons enrolled in the ARSeniors program, which expands non-institutional coverage and benefits for seniors aged 65 and over.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The ARSeniors program expanded Medicaid coverage to 7,191 seniors this quarter, an increase of 378 seniors. ARSeniors serves Arkansans 65 years or older that have incomes at or below 80% of the FPL. Arkansas Medicaid benefits that are not covered by Medicare are available to ARSeniors participants. Some examples of these benefits are coverage for physician, lab, pharmacy, and inpatient services. Additionally, the ARSeniors program pays the Medicare premium to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for qualified seniors. As a result, the SSA does not withhold this premium from these seniors in their SSA benefits. TS-MEP funds for the ARSeniors program totaled \$5,935,058 during this quarter.

- **Indicator:** The TS-MEP will increase the average number of persons enrolled in the Developmental Disabilities Services, Community and Employment Supports (CES) Waiver and note the number of adults and children receiving services each quarter by county.

 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. This quarter, 500 individuals were provided services. This is a slight increase of four in the number of persons served from the previous quarter and fills the 500 TS-MEP funded slots for this program. This quarter, a total of 86 children (18 and under) and 414 adults in 72 of 75 counties were provided services. The CES waiver provides assistance for major life activities to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This includes activities such as living independently and working in a job in the community rather than an institutional setting. TS-MEP funding helps to reduce the waitlist for this population of Arkansans. TS-MEP funds for the CES waiver program totaled \$24,422,532 in this quarter.

UAMS-COA PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The purpose of the UAMS Centers on Aging is to address one of the most pressing policy issues facing this country: how to care for the burgeoning number of older adults in rural community settings. The overall goal is to improve the quality of life for older adults and their families through two primary missions: an infrastructure that provides quality interdisciplinary clinical care and innovative education programs.

Program Goal

The goal of the UAMS-COA is to improve the health of older Arkansans through interdisciplinary geriatric care and innovative education programs and to influence health policy affecting older adults.

UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

The UAMS-COA continues to seek and find ways to cope with changes in healthcare systems and the needs of the population served. Some of the most encouraging opportunities are described below.

- *Distribution of services:* UAMS-COA typically offers at least minimal services in a majority of Arkansas counties (this quarter, 54 out of 75 counties were served). As severe weather and lingering fears of infectious disease limited many traditional client-based services, the COA directors and clients continue to rely on digital tools and online forms of communication to meet client needs. There is some evidence that these digital tools and techniques have helped the COAs provide a richer assortment of services to a broader base of clients.
- *Service innovation:* The agency continues to innovate the delivery of services to expand public access to information and educational programming throughout the state. This includes expansion of investments in virtual reality equipment that augments education related to dementia, sensory deficits, and end-of-life care. This also includes expansion of the SUCCESS family caregiver program to assist families in the wake of a home healthcare labor shortage.
- *Raising awareness:* The UAMS-COA continues raising awareness about the challenges of aging in Arkansas. Representatives from the agency continually pursue public relations opportunities to combat ageism, encourage successful aging practices, and generally celebrate the contributions of older adults in the state. Of particular significance in this regard, Dr. Overton-McCoy, director of the UAMS-COA, is an appointed member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. This appointment helps extend the agency's ability to raise awareness at the highest levels of state government.
- *Partnerships:* The UAMS-COA continues to foster partnerships with other agencies to lead the state with respect to mitigating opiate abuse, monitoring falls, expanding geriatric caregiver training, reducing hunger among seniors, and increasing awareness of chronic disease. This quarter, the UAMS-COA has partnered with a number of other entities to build resources for seniors in Arkansas. These partnerships include UAMS East Regional Campus, Harvest Regional Food Bank, Alzheimer's Arkansas, SHIPP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program), Workforce Development, AR Rehab, University of Arkansas County Extension Services, University of Arkansas, Veterans Administration, CASA (Committee Against Spousal Abuse) Women's Shelter, Alzheimer's Association, Senior Olympics, Crystal Bridges, Whole Nedz, Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention, Arkansas Diabetes Advisory Council, Department on Aging Services, first responders (local fire departments, law enforcement officers, and emergency medical services), community libraries, rural health clinics, elder law resources, senior housing facilities, assisted living and long-term care facilities, senior home caregiver agencies, local businesses, parks and recreation departments, and community clinics.

UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities Continued

- Enhancing the geriatric medicine workforce: The UAMS-COA works with multiple colleges and universities across the state to recruit and train new geriatric specialists in different allied health fields. This includes sponsoring fellowships for medical students and social workers. It also includes efforts to increase high school student interest in geriatric-related careers.
- Enhanced attention to the outlying regions: The UAMS-COA continues expanding relationships with UAMS East Regional Campus combining resources to better serve Crittenden, Monroe, Lee, St. Francis, and Phillips counties by implementing Walk with Ease, the Diabetes Empowerment Education Program, Cooking Matters, and other education events. Expansion of UAMS facilities in El Dorado also helps broaden impact in the southern portion of the state.

Overall, the UAMS-COA is open to innovation and actively seeking opportunities that contribute positively to the health of older Arkansans.

Challenges

- The aging of the state's population coupled with a constantly changing market-based national healthcare model continues to be a primary challenge to the clinical aspects of this agency's mission. Pandemic burnout and labor pressures on the entire healthcare system have added further strain to an already tenuous network of specialized care. Outside of UAMS in Little Rock, there are only two specialized geriatric clinics remaining in the state. Nonetheless, the UAMS-COA remains committed to adjusting the referral process ensuring that seniors in Arkansas have the best possible access to healthcare services in places where Senior Health Clinic access is unavailable.
- Despite the availability of vaccines and treatments, UAMS-COA client populations remain some of the most vulnerable to infectious diseases due to age and underlying chronic health conditions. As health risks related to the pandemic become more manageable, more in-person opportunities are returning but much of the client population still harbors fears of infection. While online alternatives have been refined over the course of the pandemic, these alternatives cannot fully replace traditional programming (for example, exercise activities are limited by safety concerns for remote participants). Many clients in rural areas lack reliable access to online platforms. Many people in the age cohorts served by the COAs also find alternative digital activities less desirable than in-person contacts. All of these factors have contributed to limited progress in reaching new clients in an expanding population.

UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Challenges Continued

- Staffing issues continue to threaten the flow of services throughout the state. This impacts both COA staffing and clinic access. Despite progress made by recently filling central leadership positions, the Delta Center is still missing vital staff and this is limiting service in that portion of the state. The increased demand for healthcare professionals persistently poses problems for hiring and retention, especially for hiring qualified professionals in rural counties and less-developed portions of the state (e.g., specialists in dementia assessment and management).
- Adequate supervision of COAs in more remote regions of Arkansas has always been a concern of this agency. Efforts have been made to address many of the issues but keeping staff trained and monitoring activity across the COAs remains challenging.
- Changing racial and ethnic demographics of seniors in some areas of the state necessitate planning for more inclusive communication and the development of bilingual or multilingual materials and programs.
- Due to underdeveloped infrastructure, poverty, and small and decentralized populations, the basic UAMS-COA model is more difficult to deploy in some areas of the state. For example, it is estimated that in this quarter, residents of almost one third of the 75 counties in Arkansas received no direct services from the UAMS-COA. More effort is needed to find effective modes of delivery for serving seniors in impoverished, hard-to-reach communities. These concerns escalated during the pandemic as an increasing volume of COA client services have, out of necessity, shifted to an internet-based model. Client services are unavailable to many as substantial portions of the state lack reliable broadband Internet access and the effectiveness of online delivery models is questionable due to lack of resources to fully evaluate these newer service modalities.
- The agency continues developing the data collection and data processing capacity needed to fully assess program outcomes. Much progress has been made on developing a new monitoring system, but some challenges have been exacerbated by the shift to digital training modes. New efforts are underway to develop a more standardized measure of health improvement that can be associated with program participation. However, many of these initiatives have been delayed due to strains imposed by the pandemic.
- It may be time to explore and introduce new evidence-based exercise options offered to seniors in the state. Participants have been demanding more variety for several quarters but developing/implementing new programs has been made more difficult by the pandemic. Some of the current options are hard to monitor for quality and safety using online interaction formats. It is important to continue efforts aimed at comparing the effectiveness of traditional modes of service delivery to newer modes of delivery.

UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Challenges Continued

- Many of the programs and services offered through the UAMS-COA have an indirect effect on senior health in Arkansas. The UAMS-COA continues efforts aimed at demonstrating the net positive impact (including the economic impact) of services provided by the agency. However, the return-on-investment models have not yet been sufficiently developed. Social and economic disruptions associated with the pandemic have altered key variables and have stalled development of these return-on-investment models.
- As state and federal funding continues to evaporate, as older funding commitments end (e.g., Schmieding), and as inflationary pressures rise, maintaining external funding streams is more important than ever. At stake is the continuation of critical programs such as CNA and home caregiver training. The UAMS-COA is currently finding funds through grants, awards, service contracts, donations, and volunteer support. However, these tend to be short-term solutions. Ensuring necessary levels of support over the long-term remains a challenge especially in an economy with high labor costs and erratic investment returns.
- Finding the time and other resources necessary to stay current with best practices in geriatric care is an enduring challenge. The UAMS-COA must continue to secure professional development opportunities for staff to ensure high quality programming.

Overall, the UAMS-COA recognizes its key challenges and has become adept at formulating short-term strategies to address them. However, continuing economic uncertainty has stalled some of the progress related to these challenges.

Evaluator Comments

Prevailing evidence suggests that the UAMS-COA continues fulfilling its mission to advance the state's agenda for successful senior health services, knowledge, and programming in Arkansas. Despite numerous strains on conventional service modalities, the UAMS-COA has enhanced senior health this quarter through the following activities:

- Maintaining alliances between nonprofit, for-profit, and state-funded agencies to better address the needs of older adults in Arkansas;
- Developing digital resources on aging-related issues that help reach broader audiences;
- Educating the community about the special needs of older adults;
- Keeping seniors active by providing exercise opportunities across the state (through multiple platforms);
- Recognizing the necessity of fall prevention and healthy exercise education for seniors and mobilizing resources to meet the need;

UAMS-COA EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Evaluator Comments Continued

- Leading efforts to develop alternative therapies for pain management;
- Leading efforts in mental health and suicide prevention in the state;
- Enhancing the healthcare workforce with geriatric training for medical professionals;
- Working to develop better models of long-term care in Arkansas;
- Working to educate family caregivers and increase the capacity for quality in-home senior healthcare;
- Focusing on dementia care and building dementia-friendly communities; and
- Addressing needs exacerbated by the pandemic such as social isolation and hunger among older adults.

Throughout the quarter, rising economic uncertainty continued to disrupt daily operations of the UAMS-COA. Nonetheless, the agency has made progress in program development and is on a strong trajectory to meet its annual goals.

UAMS-COA INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

Improve the health status and decrease death rates of elderly Arkansans as well as obtain federal and philanthropic grant funding.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will provide multiple exercise activities to maximize the number of exercise encounters for older adults throughout the state.
 - **Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal, although the effort continues to be altered due to concerns surrounding COVID-19. A total of 1,316 exercise encounters with senior Arkansans were counted during this reporting period with encounters distributed across five of the state's seven COAs. The exercise options have been curated by the UAMS-COA to include evidence-based programs that address the core concerns of the client population (e.g., balance/fall prevention and pain management). A majority of the 1,316 encounters were live, in-person experiences as opposed to Facebook or videoconference methods. Overall, the UAMS-COA provided approximately 188 hours of exercise programming to seniors this quarter and preliminary self-reported data suggest that these exercise options are meeting the perceived needs of participants.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will implement at least two educational offerings (annually) for evidence-based disease management programs.
 - **Progress:** Exceeding Expectations
 - **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations to meet the annual goal. During this quarter, the UAMS-COA offered evidence-based educational programs that addressed a range of health priorities related to aging. This quarter, UAMS-COA staff provided 1,749 hours of educational offerings including 366 hours in critical focal areas: caregiving/dementia training (158 hours), healthy eating/food insecurity (32 hours), and mental health/well-being (176 hours).

- **Indicator:** On an annual basis, the UAMS Centers on Aging will obtain external funding to support programs in amounts equivalent to ATSC funding for that year.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. In this quarter, the UAMS-COA developed external support from various sources valued at approximately \$709,845. This amount exceeds the quarterly goal of \$485,949 and represents three consecutive quarters of positive fundraising.

UAMS-COA INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- Activity continued:** The UAMS-COA and its affiliates have elevated their productivity in securing external funding despite continuing disruptions associated with the pandemic. During this quarter, \$413,057 was raised from seven different grants to support programming. The most sizable grant received this quarter was a \$354,000 award from USDA to support virtual-reality-based dementia education. Another large stream of funding came from the Schmieding Foundation that provided \$135,652 to support Schmieding Center operations. Additional extramural funding included community partner donations (\$24,200), UAMS core support (\$114,000), and the value of volunteer hours supplied to the COAs (\$210). The agency also received \$22,725 through contractual service agreements (but these amounts were unavailable at the time of the report). Financial numbers indicate clear efforts to remain active in external fundraising and these amounts represent a significant increase over the previous quarter. Overall, the UAMS-COA had a successful quarter of external funding by leveraging \$709,845 above the \$485,949 in quarterly funding provided through the ATSC.

Short-Term Objective

Prioritize the list of health problems and planned interventions for elderly Arkansans and increase the number of Arkansans participating in health improvement programs.

- Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will assist local healthcare providers in maintaining the maximum number of Senior Health Clinic encounters through a continued positive relationship.
 - Progress:** On Track, Influenced by COVID-19
 - Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. The UAMS-COA recorded 1,569 Senior Health Clinic encounters during this reporting period. There were no recorded nursing home, inpatient, or home visits during this period. Given the diminished capacity of general health clinics and the paucity of specialized geriatric care in the state, UAMS-COA is doing the best it can to broker clinical services.
- Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will provide education programming to healthcare practitioners and students of the healthcare disciplines to provide specialized training in geriatrics.
 - Progress:** On Track
 - Activity:** This indicator is on track. The UAMS-COA produced 929 hours of educational presentations and in-service training opportunities attended by 185 healthcare practitioners and students during this reporting period (most of these were in-person encounters).

UAMS-COA INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS Centers on Aging will provide educational opportunities for the community annually.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track to meet the annual goal. Using live events, social media, and other means of communication, the UAMS-COA generated 4,062 community education encounters during this reporting period. While approximately 43% of these encounters occurred in person (1,762), other encounters occurred via telephone or online platforms (e.g., 1,541 encounters were recorded from Facebook).

- **Indicator:** On an annual basis, the UAMS Centers on Aging will develop a list of health problems that should be prioritized and education-related interventions that will be implemented for older Arkansans.
 - **Progress:** Met
 - **Activity:** This indicator has been met for the calendar year and no further progress is needed. Planning for FY23 was completed during the prior quarter. A list of prioritized problems and interventions was generated. The list is similar to the FY22 priorities and includes a continued emphasis on fall reduction and healthy activity, a revised emphasis on healthy eating and food insecurity, an emphasis on caregiving/dementia training, and a new emphasis on mental health/well-being. The COA directors will continue to monitor the current and emerging needs of older Arkansans and make adjustments if necessary.

UAMS-COA TESTIMONIAL

Reflections from Attendees at Dementia Programs

Attendees at a dementia seminar at South Arkansas COA shared the following:

- "This presentation gave me a better insight on red flags to watch out for professionally and personally. It allowed me to get first-hand experience in how the patient functions and lives with such a devastating disease."
- "I will use this information to help me properly speak and approach someone with Alzheimer's. I will also use the information to detect red flags for early Alzheimer's."
- "I will use this information to better care for patients physically and emotionally."
- "As a nursing student this is important to me for future reference to help me understand dementia patients and how their family feels."
- "I will now have a better understanding of how my grandfather's mind is working and I can be better at helping him. This should also help me with my professional career."

Participants involved in a dementia workshop at Schmieding Center for Senior Health Education offered the following:

- "I did not know the Schmieding Center existed because I have not lived in this area very long. It is a great resource and the dementia workshop increased my knowledge and understanding of this illness."
- "I believe that as new information is available, it increases my ability to care for my clients in the best possible manner....Thank you for offering these workshops!"
- "Without your training and expertise, our last six months together would have been so much worse than they were, so I will be forever grateful for all you did to help me. Know how much I appreciated all the special extras you provided and guided me with. You were an invaluable godsend and I will never forget you! Blessings to all and keep up the great work!"
- "This helped me have a greater understanding of the way my mom views things and has helped me to be more patient with her."

UAMS EAST PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Program Description

The University of Arkansas Medical Sciences East Regional Campus provides healthcare outreach services to seven counties including St. Francis, Lee, Phillips, Chicot, Desha, Monroe, and Crittenden counties. The UAMS East Regional Campus, formerly known as the Delta Area Health Education Center and UAMS East, was established in 1990 with the purpose of providing health education to underserved populations in the Arkansas Delta region. The counties and populations served by the UAMS East Regional Campus are some of the unhealthiest in the state with limited access to healthcare services being one of the challenges. As a result of limited access and health challenges, the UAMS East Regional Campus has become a full-service health education center with a focus on wellness and prevention for this region. The program has shown a steady increase in encounters with the resident population and produced a positive impact on the health and wellness of the region. Programs to address local health needs of residents are being implemented in partnership with more than 100 different agencies. The overall mission of the UAMS East Regional Campus is to improve the health of the Delta's population. Goals include increasing the number of communities and clients served and increasing access to primary care providers in underserved counties.

Program Goal

The goal of the UAMS East Regional Campus is to recruit and retain healthcare professionals and to provide community-based healthcare and education to improve the health of the people residing in the Delta region.

UAMS EAST EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Opportunities

UAMS East West Memphis staff member Caitlin Howe and an outreach team member attended a virtual Safety Baby Shower Train the Trainer class with Arkansas Children's Hospital Injury Prevention Center and received further supplies in addition to car seats. Howe is currently working on setting up a Safety Baby Shower event in Earle, Arkansas.

UAMS East Lake Village and Chicot Memorial are excited to have recently received the Bladder Scan i10 System purchased with grant funds of \$10,000 from the King's Daughters and Sons Circle Number Two. This ultrasound device delivers trusted accuracy for every user when measuring the volume of urine in the bladder. It will also provide patients and clinicians a much better alternative when it comes to evaluating the need for urinary catheter placement and infection prevention. Before scanners, physicians and clinicians had to resort to catheterization, which was not always needed. This piece of equipment will be exceptionally useful and will benefit patients for years to come.

UAMS East received publicity about its *Good Food Rx* program in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. Also, this quarter, Director Stephanie Loveless presented during the Chancellor's Town Hall meeting on the *Good Food Rx* project, which has led to additional meetings and discussion on the project. Loveless will also be meeting with the UAMS Culinary Medicine group to discuss the project. This project has also received press from Arkansas Business, AR Money, and Politics Online.

UAMS East is working with community health workers from a UAMS project targeting heart healthy communities. UAMS East has offered to provide support and education and will work with workers to help secure transportation if needed.

Challenges

The UAMS East Regional Campus director reports that it is challenging to continue to exceed performance numbers with limited staff. Current staff are being utilized for multiple programs.

UAMS EAST EVALUATOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Evaluator Comments

The majority of UAMS East indicators are on track with their success rate from the previous year. Two indicators are exceeding expectations. The diabetes education program has struggled in the past to meet expectations due to staff shortages. However, since the addition of the work of the health coaches at the FMC and the DEEP program in West Memphis, this indicator is on its way to being met. Additionally, the exercise encounters are ahead of the values for last year at this time. The Rural Residency Training (RRT) program remains challenging in that the number of patients required to support the training program has not been reached by the FMC. They are continuing to increase the number of patients served, and adding new patients, but this remains a challenge for acquiring the RRT track. UAMS East continues to take advantage of opportunities to form partnerships to provide support services and resources to the Delta region of Arkansas.

UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

Long-Term Objective

Increase the number of health professionals practicing in the UAMS East Regional Campus service areas.

Indicator: The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain the number of students participating in pre-health professions recruitment activities.

- **Progress:** On Track
- **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The program, Day in the Life was held for 10th–12th grade students at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (PCC/UA) in Helena for 29 students. This event featured health professions speaking along with hands-on activities. In addition, the students rotated through the various departments of Allied Health to hear about their program and do a variety of activities. A second Day in the Life took place on the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) campus for 45 students. This was a partnership with UAMS South Central, UAMS South, UAMS East, and UAM. Students heard a variety of speakers and traveled to the College of Nursing and science departments where they did hand-on activities.
- Another continued partnership is with the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership (ARHP) this quarter, the pre-professions recruiter met ARHP’s mobile unit at two locations (Brinkley High School and Palestine-Wheatley High School) with 149 students attending. The goal of the partnership is to collaborate to offer health career experiences and information for Arkansas middle and high school students. Currently, the ARHP has purchased a mobile unit that will travel to high schools to offer students hands-on activities in health careers.
- The UAMS East Pre-Professions recruiter traveled to Hot Springs for the state competition of HOSA – Future Health Professionals Association in March. This was a two-day event with 1,025 students and advisors attending. The recruiter was a judge for the competition. In addition to the State HOSA competition, the UAMS East recruiter attended an event hosted by UAMS College of Pharmacy for HOSA students who were interested in pursuing a career in pharmacy. Sixty-one students and their chapter advisors, from around the state attended. The UAMS East recruiter continued to work with the UAMS Regional Programs, AHEC Scholars program and helped recruit the UAMS College of Medicine M2 students. They have successfully signed up 31 students to participate in the program during their last two years of medical school. The UAMS East recruiter continues to work with the Physician Assistant students enrolled in AHEC Scholars.

UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will continue to provide assistance to health professions students and residents, including RN to BSN and BSN to MSN students, medical students and other interns.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. UAMS East has one student in the UAMS Master’s program.

Short-Term Objective

Increase the number of communities and clients served through UAMS East Regional Campus.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain the number of clients receiving health screenings, referrals to primary care physicians, and education on chronic disease prevention and management within 10% of the previous year.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. In all, UAMS East provided 798 screenings at six events. UAMS East conducted health screenings for 50 residents of Christopher Homes at a health and wellness event. UAMS East Lake Village conducted employee wellness for Chicot Memorial Medical Center and Superior Uniform. Lack Village also provided screenings at the local community center. In addition, 48 employees took part in health screenings and wellness educational opportunities. Abnormal screenings are reported as follows: blood pressure, 96; BMI, 38; cholesterol, 29; glucose, 18; and waist circumference, 31.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain a robust health education promotion and prevention program for area youth and adults.
 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. UAMS East Regional Campus provided health education promotion and prevention programs for a total of 10,360 youth and adults. There were 7,390 youth and 2,970 adults that participated in or received health education services this quarter.
 - UAMS East Regional Campus at Lake Village in collaboration with Desha County Cooperative Extension offered *Cook Smart, Eat Smart* for 22 participants. This program focuses on offering a fun, educational program with hands-on preparation of healthy, budget-friendly meals. Also in Lake Village, a community outreach event was held focusing on raising stroke awareness with minority populations. Brody Emerson, RN at Chicot Memorial Medical Center (CMMC), and Leigh Anthony, UAMS East Regional Campus Lake Village site director, visited the Chicot County Health Unit and provided staff education with stroke resources and other informative materials for local patients. Fifty-six participants were educated through this initiative.

UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Activity continued:** UAMS East Regional Campus Lake Village held three virtual Baby Safety Showers for 14 expectant moms and their support systems. UAMS East Lake Village distributed and installed two convertible car seats and reviewed car safety and safe sleep information with caregivers. There are plans to continue the partnership with Arkansas Children's Hospital to begin more outreach next quarter.
- UAMS East supplied 100 dental/hygiene kits to community members attending the mobile food drop off locations this quarter. Those locations are all very rural, miles from the nearest grocery store and participants may not have access to the local food bank because of transportation and other issues. This new partnership is very valuable and rewarding.
- UAMS East West Memphis completed one group of childcare and safety classes with East Central Arkansas Community Correction Center (ECACC) for 105 women. West Memphis held two groups of parenting classes at ECACC for 252 encounters. UAMS East and UAMS East West Memphis are offering the *Kids for Health* program. Six schools in Phillips and Crittenden counties are participating and 7,280 students took part in and received weekly health education sessions. UAMS East West Memphis has begun a collaboration with PHLEX Services. PHLEX (Preparing Healthy Lives to Embrace X-cellece) was founded by Dr. Rhonda Laster and Rev. Larry Brown. UAMS staff are providing an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention component that includes nutrition and health information to 10 young women.
- UAMS East Regional Campus provided American Heart Association HeartSaver® First Aid CPR AED for 30 consumers including local daycares and head start locations. Both UAMS East and Lake Village provide *Basic Life Support* (BLS). This quarter, BLS was held for 19 practicing healthcare providers. UAMS East also provided over 200 dental kits to a local community group to utilize at an outreach effort for parents and community members. UAMS East provided materials and support to a local church to present consequences of smoking and vaping to 100 church members.

■ **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will maintain the number of clients participating in exercise programs offered by UAMS East Regional Campus within 10% of the previous year.

- **Progress:** On Track
- **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations. This quarter, UAMS East Regional Campus Fitness Center/walking track encounters totaled 7,085. UAMS East Regional Campus continued its group exercise classes. Yoga was conducted for 392 participants, while Silver Sneakers classes have been conducted for 170 participants. UAMS East Regional Campus Lake Village helps provide support and education to members of the Community Outreach Center. This quarter, there were 2,407 visits at the center. Also, this quarter exercise classes were offered at McGehee Methodist Church for 339 participants.

UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will provide medical library services to consumers, students, and health professionals.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. UAMS East Regional Campus Medical Resource Library provided support to healthcare professionals and students through literature searches and teaching materials. This quarter, 30 nursing students and 15 other healthcare professionals utilized the library. UAMS East Regional Campus Library also provided support to 1,823 consumers. The library circulated 52 books, 76 AVs and conducted 30 electronic searches. The Medical Resource Library provided assistance to Lee County Cooperative Clinic through the use of teaching models and materials; in all, 1,200 clients received services.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will plan and implement a Rural Residency Training Track for Family Medicine in Helena, in partnership with the UAMS South Central residency program.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. UAMS East Regional Campus is slowly building the foundation for the RRT by increasing the number of patients served by the Family Medical Center (FMC) in Helena. An appropriate patient load is critical to the application for the RRT.

- **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will increase the number of patient encounters by 5% annually at the UAMS Family Medical Center in Helena.

 - **Progress:** On Track
 - **Activity:** This indicator is on track. The UAMS East FMC continues to serve the area as a patient-centered medical home clinic, where patients can be referred to two health coaches for smoking cessation, weight loss, and chronic disease management. The FMC had a total of 1,116 patient visits in 60 days of the clinic this quarter. There were 80 new patients this quarter. The FMC staff is utilizing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention measures to improve the health of the rural Delta population.
 - UAMS East Regional Campus has offered its first *Good Food Rx* for FMC patients. This research study is provided to FMC patients the second Tuesday of every month and held its first event on March 14th. The food as medicine program has 23 patients enrolled in the study. The patients have been assigned to three different groups including diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. These groups are all assigned a diet intervention based on diagnosis, and with this diet intervention they receive monthly nutrition education; a 40-50 pound food box containing fresh, frozen, and canned products with emphasis on healthy foods for the prescribed diet including DASH, Diabetes, and Mediterranean. Patients are receiving clinical support in choosing healthy foods in the market-style approach to food shopping.

UAMS EAST INDICATORS AND PROGRESS

- **Activity:** UAMS FMC staff were informed by Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield that the clinic has met three of the utilizations metric performance measures, which will add \$3 per member per month to the clinic's care management fees.
- The FMC hosted three Teddy Bear Clinics this quarter for 59 youth in three different pre-schools. The Teddy Bear Project is a really fun way to ease the fear that kids have about going to the doctor. It also teaches them the importance of a wellness check-up every year. The FMC offers this as a community service project.
- The FMC also will begin offering new forms of birth control for clients. With the high teen pregnancy rate, this will be a valuable addition to the services the clinic offers the community. These services are not performed by any primary care practices in Phillips County.
- The FMC also provided clinical opportunities for students from PCC/UA, which included RN, LPN and MLT (Medical Laboratory Technician) students. UAMS East health coaches provided coaching to 32 referred clinic patients. Also, health coaches provided smoking cessation to nine patients this quarter. Of the nine participants, three quit smoking, and one quit vaping through the 8-week cessation program.

■ **Indicator:** The UAMS East Regional Campus will provide diabetes education to at least 100 community members annually.

- **Progress:** Exceeding Expectations
- **Activity:** This indicator is exceeding expectations. UAMS East provided diabetes education and outreach to 23 FMC patients through coaching sessions. This quarter, an additional 35 community members were provided assistance. UAMS East West Memphis provided two Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP) sessions to 165 women. UAMS East scheduled The Diabetic Shoppe to set up and provide fittings for diabetic shoes and orthotic inserts. Over 25 people were in attendance.

UAMS EAST TESTIMONIAL

Program Praise

- "Everything here was amazing and I will genuinely cherish all that I have been shown!" - Participant of *Day in the Life*
- "Everyone I came in contact with was very polite. I felt very comfortable at this clinic. I received a call back the next day about my labs. I had to wait and sometimes leave messages with my other provider for someone to let me know my results in the past. Super sweet people. I look forward to coming back!" - FMC patient
- "I enjoyed everything in this class. All the information that I got can and will be used when I go home. I also am taking away from this class just to be more aware of the safety of my kids. This class is very important to me due to the fact that I can never know too much." - Participant of Childcare and Safety Class
- "I learned a lot about diabetes and received a paper I continue to look back at. You covered everything. This class was awesome." - Participant of DEEP
- "I didn't think that I would learn anything useful, but surprisingly I have learned a lot about how to communicate with my children and how to use positive discipline as opposed to spanking and hitting." - Participant of parenting class

SUMMARY

For all ATSC-funded programs during this evaluation period, 95% of indicators were on track or exceeding expectations towards annual goals or were met ahead of schedule. Five percent of indicators were in need of improvement to meet annual goals. In all, 22% of indicators were influenced by COVID-19 (see Table 1).

Explanation of Indicators in Need of Improvement

- **Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program**
 - Two TPCP indicators were reported as in need of improvement. First, the sales-to-minor non-compliance rate has increased this quarter after making improvements at the start of the fiscal year. However, the current rate (10.16%) is still less than the rate at the end of FY22 (11.63%). Second, the TPCP's goal to establish seven new PPYC school chapters in Red Counties is lagging behind with only one new chapter since the start of the fiscal year, including no new chapters this quarter. The agency continues to offer education and other opportunities for schools within Red Counties and across the state.
- **Tobacco Settlement Medicaid Expansion Program**
 - One indicator under the TS-MEP was reported as in need of improvement. The number of women served by the Pregnant Women Expansion program was down, in part, because of extended health coverage during the pandemic. Also, as the TS-MEP evaluator reported, coverage is only being terminated due to death, moving out of the state, incarceration, or at the request of the client, so there has been less need to apply for coverage specifically for pregnancy.

Despite the need for some improvements to meet annual indicator goals and other program challenges noted above, ATSC-funded programs proved adaptable, creative, and resilient while working through impacts from the pandemic. Evaluators also reported that programs continued to focus on creating new partnerships to broaden reach; maintained a strong commitment to serve vulnerable populations, with an increased focus on mental health; continued to support the growing body of public health practitioners that serve Arkansans; and promoted strong scientific rigor in understanding health and well-being. ATSC-funded programs continued to tackle important health challenges and enhance quality of life for Arkansans.

SUMMARY

Table 1. Indicator Progress Across Programs

PROGRAM	TOTAL INDICATORS	MET	EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS	ON TRACK	IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT	COVID-19 INFLUENCED	OVERALL PROGRESS
ABI	7	--	--	7	--	--	100% On Track
COPH	9	--	--	9	--	--	100% On Track
MHI	7	--	4	3	--	--	100% On Track or Better
TPCP	19	3	--	14	2	7	89% On Track or Better
TS-MEP	5	--	--	4	1	5	80% On Track or Better
UAMS-COA	7	1	1	5	--	2	100% On Track or Better
UAMS East	9	--	2	7	--	--	100% On Track or Better
TOTAL	63	4	7	49	3	14	95% On Track or Better
						TOTAL COVID-19 INFLUENCED	22% COVID-19 Influenced

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