

By: Representative M. Shepherd

HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO COMMEMORATE THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
REGIONAL CAMPUSES OPERATED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES.

Subtitle

TO COMMEMORATE THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE REGIONAL CAMPUSES OPERATED BY THE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL
SCIENCES.

WHEREAS, Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) were first conceptualized in the United States in the early 1970s after decades of physician shortages in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, AHECs were developed as satellite educational programs that were extensions of, but at a distance from, major academic medical center campuses; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, the “Arkansas Plan for Primary Health Care” was created by a select committee of legislators and leaders from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) appointed by then Governor Dale Bumpers; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas Plan for Primary Health Care proposed the establishment of AHECs in Arkansas as a “University Medical Center without walls” and Governor Bumpers viewed these rural-based AHECs as a “key step towards bringing health care services, training, and providers closer to Arkansans in every region of the state”; and



WHEREAS, until Arkansas AHECs were created, the only residency positions open to medical graduates in the state were in Little Rock and state retention rates for UAMS graduates prior to AHECs were around forty percent (40%), and most who remained in-state stayed in central Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the AHEC network was a legislative response to the nationally accepted premise that health professionals usually established practices in the areas where they completed postgraduate training; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, the General Assembly authorized and appropriated one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to establish Arkansas AHECs that would train more primary care physicians, retain more UAMS College of Medicine graduates to practice in Arkansas, and improve the geographic distribution of physicians within the state; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas became one of the first states in the nation to develop AHECs as a state-supported approach to enhancing primary care access in rural, underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas AHEC network was initially comprised of six (6) centers distributed around the state; and

WHEREAS, each center served multiple surrounding counties such that seventy-four (74) of seventy-five (75) counties were supported by an AHEC; and

WHEREAS, the original AHECs were located in El Dorado, Pine Bluff, Fort Smith, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, and Texarkana and subsequently, AHECs were opened in Helena-West Helena, Batesville and Magnolia; and

WHEREAS, all six (6) original centers were open by 1976, with all establishing family medicine residencies by AHECs 20th anniversary in 1993; and

WHEREAS, as services expanded, UAMS transitioned its centers to be

named Regional Campuses; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the General Assembly set aside three million one hundred thousand dollars (\$3,100,000) in startup funds to establish a satellite UAMS campus in Northwest Arkansas and the campus enrolled approximately three hundred (300) students in the colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing and Health Professions, along with a large family medicine residency program; and

WHEREAS, additional programs in physical and occupational therapy have been added at the satellite UAMS campus in Northwest Arkansas over the last decade and these students also help deliver care at the Arkansas State Veterans Home; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, UAMS Regional Campuses provide future health care professionals the opportunity to live and learn in Arkansas communities away from UAMS' Little Rock campus and these students and residents are prepared for practice in rural, underserved Arkansas communities through an interprofessional, team-based approach to learning and patient care and a more varied, hands-on experience than they would receive in a traditional urban, academic environment; and

WHEREAS, each year, UAMS Regional Campuses provide state-of-the-art clinical training for one hundred fifty-seven (157) family medicine residents and over two hundred fifty (250) health professions students; and

WHEREAS, over the past five (5) decades, UAMS Regional Campuses have trained nearly one thousand five hundred (1,500) family medicine physicians, sixty-three percent (63%) of whom remained in Arkansas to practice, and thirty-seven percent (37%) in rural counties; and

WHEREAS, currently, approximately seven hundred (700) UAMS Regional Campuses family medicine residency graduates practice in sixty-nine (69) of the state's seventy-five (75) counties; and

WHEREAS, one-half (1/2) of all family physicians practicing in rural

Arkansas counties completed their training at a UAMS Regional Campuses program, and thousands of multidisciplinary Health Professions students and tens of thousands of high school and college students have been encouraged to pursue health careers through experiences at these Regional Campuses; and

WHEREAS, UAMS Regional Campuses provide comprehensive primary care services to thousands of Arkansans each year in their clinics, and Regional Campus faculty, trainees and staff are also active members of their communities, providing leadership and significant outreach activities across their regions, including health screenings, rural health research, mobile outreach clinics, telehealth services, support groups, educational programs, library services, and many other health-related activities; and

WHEREAS, local support, including from partnering physicians and hospitals, has been invaluable in building a strong community base for UAMS Regional Campuses to thrive; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas received its first federal AHEC grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration in 1986 and since that time, UAMS Regional Campuses faculty and staff have successfully competed for millions of dollars of federal grant funds to support its primary care training programs and its long-term workforce pipeline programs, such as CHAMPS and M*A*S*H summer camps for middle and high school students, respectively; and

WHEREAS, working through strategic partnerships, UAMS Regional Campuses will continue to identify and address healthcare workforce supply and distribution needs, and to help ensure that all Arkansans have access to high quality, patient-centered primary care services and well-trained providers in every region of our state,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives celebrate the 50th anniversary of

UAMS Regional Campuses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the House of Representatives honor the tremendous health and economic impact the UAMS Regional Campuses have had at the local, regional and statewide levels, and look forward to many more years of their ongoing success.