PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY
News
November 2026

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Pulaski County Medical Society
500 S. University Avenue, Suite A14
Little Rock, AR 72205
Phone: 501.687.0039
Email: derek@pulaskicms.org
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2026 Annual Meeting and Dinner held November 5th



The 2026 Annual Pulaski County Medical Society and Pulaski County Medical Exchange had their annual membership meetings on Thursday, November 5, 2026 at the Chenal County Club. The over 90 attendees met to take care of society and medical exchange business and to honor fellow doctors.

During dinner PCMS President Leticia Jones, MD presented the Outstanding Student Award to Ben Alexander. This award is voted on by the medical students at UAMS.



President Leticia Jones, MD

Dr. Jones also presented the 2026 Outstanding Young Physician Award to Dr. Derrick Henry, and the President's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Medicine to Dr. Paul Wendel. Dr. Wendel joins the ranks of former honorees like Dr. Debra Morrison, Dr. John Jones, Sr., Dr. Lawrence Mendelsohn, and Dr. Joseph Bates.



President Leticia Jones, MD presents Outstanding Young Physician Award to Dr. Derrick Henry..



President Leticia Jones, MD presents President's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Medicine to Dr. Paul Wendel.



President Leticia Jones, MD presents Outstanding Student Award to Ben Alexander.

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Seeing the Invisible

John T. Ryman, JD, Senior Claims Attorney, SVMIC

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"Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others." Jonathan Swift

Swift died in 1745, 150 years before Wilhelm Conrad Rontgen accidently discovered X-rays. So, of course, Swift was not talking about radiology, but when I saw this quote recently, it reminded me of this case.

Josh Able was a 14-year-old high school football star. Like many teenagers, Josh liked to relax with video games and junk food. After an evening of overindulging in snacks, Josh did not feel well when he awoke early the next morning.

Josh arrived with his mother at the emergency room shortly after 5:00 a.m. on April 17, 2020, with complaints of right lower quadrant pain, nausea, and vomiting. Josh's appendix could not be visualized on an abdominal ultrasound. The abdominal exam by the Emergency Room (ER) physician was benign. However, Josh was transferred to a local children's hospital with concern about possible appendicitis. When Josh arrived there mid-morning, his blood pressure and white blood count were elevated. He had a history of hypertension. Josh reported that he had been nauseous since the day before with persistent abdominal pain that migrated to his right lower quadrant. The ER physician ordered a Computed Tomography (CT) scan of the abdomen and pelvis with contrast. The CT was interpreted by our insured, Dr. Baker. In his report, Dr. Baker noted that "the vermiform appendix is normal in appearance… no acute findings." The ER physician, based on his physical exam and the report from Dr. Baker, gave Josh morphine and Zofran and discharged him in stable condition. Josh and his mother were instructed to immediately return to the ER for evaluation if he developed intractable pain, nausea, or vomiting.

On April 20, Josh went to a primary care clinic where he reported that symptoms including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea had been ongoing for four days and had worsened. An abdominal X-ray was obtained with an impression of nonobstructive bowel gas. A blood test was ordered, and Josh was discharged. His mother received a phone call from the clinic the following morning advising her that, based on the blood test results, she should take Josh to the nearest ER.

At the ER, a CT scan with contrast showed that Josh had evidence of a ruptured appendix with multiple intraperitoneal abscesses. Josh was transferred by ambulance to a children's hospital where an intraabdominal drain was placed. The drain was removed on April 26 prior to discharge. On May 1, Josh was readmitted with recurrent abdominal pain and fever. A new drain was inserted and remained until May 13. Josh underwent removal of his appendix on July 21. Thankfully, within a few months Josh had fully recovered and was playing football for his high school and ultimately went on to play college football.

Approximately one year after the medical care by Dr. Baker, Josh's parents filed a lawsuit on his behalf against Dr. Baker and his group. The plaintiffs alleged that Dr. Baker failed to diagnose appendicitis, and that the failure caused injuries.

Dr. Baker's defense team built a defense based on the theme that Dr. Baker's interpretation of the CT scan was within the standard of care. Only with the benefit of hindsight could one possibly identify elements in the imaging that might be subtle indications of appendicitis. Defense attorneys for Dr. Baker retained two radiologists and two general surgeons who supported the defense theme. More specifically, the experts believed that Josh did not have appendicitis when he presented to the hospital on April 17, and thus surgical treatment was not indicated. The facts indicated that appendicitis probably developed on the 18th or 19th.

About four and a half years after Dr. Baker interpreted the CT scan, the case went to trial. Dr. Baker and his group were the only defendants. The plaintiff's radiology expert supported the plaintiff's theory that the findings on the April 17th CT were consistent with appendicitis, and that Dr. Baker should have reported those findings to the ER doctor. The plaintiff had emergency medicine and surgical experts who supported the assertion that if Dr. Baker had accurately identified the appendicitis, a surgical consult would have been oobtained,and surgery could have been performed to avoid the rupture and subsequent hospitalization.

The trial lasted six days. After hearing all the facts, the jury was asked to answer the essential question of, "Do you find the Defendants to be at fault?". After about 90 minutes of deliberations, the jury said "No". There was no need for the jury to answer any other questions. At trial the defense team and Dr. Baker successfully educated the jury on the facts. The jury understood that Dr. Baker met the standard of care and found that he was not responsible for any injuries to Josh.

It is generally accepted that the most important witness in a medical negligence trial is the physician defendant. In this case, Dr. Baker did a very good job defending his care by educating the jury. He showed the jury that the findings he allegedly missed on imaging were extremely subtle and inconclusive. The defense experts explained that the imaging was normal, and the alleged abnormal findings were only perceptible with benefit of hindsight. Dr. Baker did not "miss" anything.

The easy approach when encountering a lawsuit alleging that a "miss" by a radiologist caused injury is to think it is a simple case and one that should be settled. The harder approach is to dig into the details, and with the help of our insured doctor, defense counsel, and defense expert consultations, learn and understand the facts. Maybe it was simply a "miss", or maybe not. In this case, we found that it was not a "miss". Through a thoughtful, deliberate process, we learned that Dr. Baker met the standard of care. This process can be difficult and challenging. It is not an easy path for the doctor or the defense team. It requires competence, perseverance, and toughness. The process of litigation, including depositions and trial, is difficult for a doctor. In his book, Do Hard Things, Steve Magness said that "[r]real toughness is experiencing discomfort or distress, leaning in, paying attention, and creating space to take thoughtful action." We are acutely aware of the challenges faced and impressed by the toughness Dr. Baker demonstrated in this case.

*Names of the parties have been changed.

2026 Annual Meeting and Dinner held November 5th

The members heard reports from UAMS Medical students Amy Schexnayder and Bailey Bean who spoke about the Neighbors Nourishing Neighbors project. This project were funded by the society in early 2026.



Amy Schexnayder & Bailey Bean



Executive Director Carl Vogelpohl

The keynote speaker was Arkansas Medical Society Executive Director Carl Vogelpohl who spoke about his vision for the state societies future, and gave a glimpse of what to expect in the upcoming 2027 legislative session.

PCMS wishes to extend a special thank you to our event Sponsors:

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Full Funding available to Rural Health Leaders

UAMS is excited to launch the new 100% online Rural Healthcare Management Graduate Certificate.

Full scholarships, including tuition, fees, books and professional development, are available to those living, working, or have the intent to work in rural Arkansas healthcare settings who start the one-year program in January!! Visit our website or message me for more information. https://bit.ly/ARruralhealth

Hurry, the applications will close December 13th!

Baptist Health Launches Arkansas' First 'OB Hub' to Add Another Layer of Safety for Moms and Babies

Baptist Health has partnered with maternal and fetal care technology company, PeriGen, to launch a centralized "OB Hub" across its seven delivery hospitals, which care for over 6,600 babies annually.

The OB Hub uses PeriGen's AI-driven PeriWatch Vigilance technology to provide an extra layer of protection for mom and baby much like an air traffic control tower for mom and baby. From this central location, experienced labor and delivery nurses continuously monitor patients alongside bedside staff, tracking:

- The baby's heart rate
- The mother's vital signs
- Contractions
- Labor progression

Baptist Health offers labor and delivery services at its hospitals in Arkadelphia, Conway, El Dorado, Little Rock, Monticello, North Little Rock and Stuttgart.

The AI system constantly reviews patient data and alerts the bedside team if any of the ranges they are monitoring fall outside safety limits. The technology does not replace doctors or nurses. Instead, it acts as a continuous "second set of eyes," ensuring mothers and babies are safely monitored even when bedside nurses may need to step away for supplies, medications or other patients.

Nicki Knowles, director of women's and children's at Baptist Health Medical Center-Little Rock, emphasized that this additional support is invaluable during busy shifts or obstetric emergencies. The PeriGen system also enables care teams to securely view patient data on mobile devices and automatically alerts hospital leaders to persistent concerns.

Because childbirth can change rapidly, the OB Hub is part of Baptist Health's ongoing commitment to using technology and teamwork to ensure safe, high-quality maternity care for families across Arkansas and the system's nursing teams, regardless of the hospital location they choose. For more information on obstetric care, visit Baptist-Health.org.

CARTI Expands Urology Team with Dr. Samantha Skinner



Dr. Samantha Skinner

CARTI is continuing to expand patients' access to trusted urological care. The not-for-profit provider recently welcomed Samantha Skinner, D.O., a board-certified urologist. Skinner will serve patients at CARTI Cancer Center North Little Rock and Pine Bluff as well as CARTI Urology in Searcy.

"Urologic conditions are common yet treatable, and with greater access to care, patients can achieve better outcomes and an enhanced quality of life," said John P. Brizzolara, M.D., medical director of urology and a board-certified urologist. "With her unique experience spanning clinical care and research and as a bilingual physician, Dr. Skinner will be an invaluable asset to our growing urology team."

Dr. Skinner completed her residency in urology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She graduated from the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine, where she served as president of the Student National Medical Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Dr. Skinner is fluent in both English and Spanish.

CARTI offers comprehensive urology services for both men and women, including treatment for stones of the ureter, kidney and genitourinary; prostate, impotence and erectile dysfunction; Peyronie's Disease; epididymitis; orchitis; female-related urological issues; and cancer-related conditions of the bladder, testicles, kidney and prostate. Those interested in referrals or appointments to CARTI Urology may call 501-906-4196.

Baptist Health College Little Rock Carries Enrollment Momentum Into Fall 2026



Baptist Health College Little Rock (BHCLR) continues to see record-high enrollment as the college prepares the next generation of health care professionals across Arkansas.

When classes commenced on Aug. 17 for fall 2026, nursing enrollment reached a decade high of 599 students, marking the college's largest turnout in 10 years. This sustained momentum follows last year's record enrollment numbers and speaks directly to the dedication of the campus community.

Overall enrollment for fall 2026 reached 723 students, including 124 students enrolled across six allied health programs.

To better serve students and help meet the growing demand for health care professionals across Arkansas, BHCLR is expanding its academic offerings. The college now offers 10 programs of study, including its first baccalaureate degree and fully online program, the RN-to-BSN program, which was introduced earlier this year and launches in spring 2027.

"It's exciting to see this growth continue for our college with nearly 600 nursing students filling our classrooms this fall," said Dr. Crystal Rose, dean of nursing. "January 2027 will be a year full of new beginnings as we expand our program tracks and continue opening doors for the next generation of health care leaders."

Adding to this growth, BHCLR is also excited to share its newest offering: a nights and weekend track for the Nursing Accelerated program, creating an additional pathway for qualified students seeking to advance their nursing education. Additionally, BHCLR's Radiography program has transitioned from

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Baptist Health College Little Rock Carries Enrollment Momentum Into Fall 2026

a certificate program to an associate degree program, marking another important step in the college's continued growth.

"We extend a heartfelt thank you to our new and returning students for choosing our college to begin their health care journey," said Dr. Karen James, interim president and dean of allied health. "We are honored to be part of their journey as they invest in their futures and prepare to make a difference in communities across Arkansas."

For more information about Baptist Health College Little Rock, visit bhclr.edu.

Baptist Health Community Outreach Launches Online 'Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge'

As the holiday season approaches, Baptist Health Community Outreach is inviting the public to participate in the "Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge." The six-week online program, running from Nov. 23, 2026 through Jan. 2, 2027, helps participants keep up their wellness goals with simple, evidence-based habits and friendly motivation.

Navigating holiday meals and busy schedules can make it difficult to prioritize health care and personal well-being. Registration for the online program is open through Nov. 21. To encourage early participation, the first 50 people to register will receive a welcome gift.

The challenge features several key components to help individuals succeed:

- Weekly guidance: Participants receive expert tips each week focused on mindful nutrition, moving your body and managing stress.
- Build habits and earn points: Individuals track their progress toward a weekly health challenge to earn points along the way.
- Engage anonymously: Users can follow their progress and see where their points land on a leaderboard among fellow participants, competing privately with no personal details shared.
- Win prizes: Points accumulate across the six weeks toward wellness prizes and incentives.

For more information or to register, visit bit.ly/BHmaintain26 or call (501) 202-1540.

CARTI's Dr. Christopher Pope Named American Society for Radiation Oncology Fellow Joins Select Group of Exemplary Physicians, Medical Physicists and Scientists



Dr. Christopher Pope

CARTI today announced that Christopher Pope, M.D., F.A.C.R., has been named a Fellow of the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), joining a select group of exemplary physicians, medical physicists and scientists worldwide who have received the honor.

"For nearly 30 years, Dr. Pope has lived CARTI's mission, serving patients with compassion, innovation and purpose," said Jonathan Pagan, M.D., M.S., CARTI's medical director of radiation oncology. "His selection as an ASTRO Fellow demonstrates not only his excellence in clinical care but also his leadership in advancing the field of radiation oncology."

First awarded in 2006, ASTRO has granted the designation to just 580 of its 10,000 members. Candidates are nominated by current ASTRO Fellows, undergo rigorous peer review and are approved by ASTRO's Board of Directors for outstanding achievements and contributions to cancer research, education, patient care and the specialty.

A board-certified radiation oncologist, Dr. Pope joined CARTI in 1999. He is a graduate of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine. He completed a residency in internal medicine at Earl K. Long Medical Hospital in Baton Rouge, followed by a residency in radiation oncology at the University of Louisville.

UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Unveils State's First Lung Screening Fleet



The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute announced today the arrival of Arkansas' first lung cancer screening vans and the launch of an unprecedented statewide effort to reduce the state's leading cause of cancer death.

Lung cancer causes approximately 2,000 deaths each year in Arkansas, which far exceeds the national average. The state ranks fifth in the nation for lung cancer mortality and third for cigarette smoking. Smoking causes nearly 90% of all lung cancers, according to the Arkansas Department of Health, with the heaviest burden falling on rural and medically underserved communities.

"Arkansas has some of the highest lung cancer rates in the country with far too many families losing loved ones to a disease that is survivable when detected early," said Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., vice chancellor of UAMS and director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. "These mobile screening units will fundamentally change access to cancer care by taking lifesaving screening directly to the communities that need it most."

Thanks to a $4 million appropriation administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration and championed by U.S. Sen. John Boozman, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute has deployed two of three new state-of-the-art mobile lung screening coaches, with the third to follow shortly.

"It was an honor to secure this funding for resources that will expand access to lifesaving lung cancer screening across our state. UAMS is a great partner in bringing quality care to more Arkansans, especially those in more rural communities, and this mobile cancer screening capability will result in increased early detection and better outcomes," said Boozman.

"By bringing these units to where people live and work, we are removing some of the biggest barriers to screening — transportation, time, and cost," said UAMS Chancellor C. Lowry Barnes, M.D. "This effort reflects our commitment to rural health."

Each coach is equipped with a Philips Incisive CT 5100 scanner, providing high-quality imaging at low-radiation doses. The units operate with advanced battery and solar-power systems and are designed for safe, efficient mobile use in rural communities.

"Expanding access to care is a shared priority for UAMS and Philips, especially for people in rural communities who may live far from a hospital or imaging center," said Brian Murphy, vice president, head of imaging, North America, Philips. "By equipping these mobile units with Philips CT systems, the program will help make CT screening services available in more rural communities across Arkansas. We are pleased to support UAMS in expanding access to these services."

Patients screened through the program will also receive tobacco cessation counseling and resources, which recent studies show can increase quit-success rates by 40% when continued for at least three months. Low-dose CT screening itself has been shown to reduce lung cancer mortality by 20%.

Eligibility determination, insurance verification, and follow-up care are coordinated by Cancer Institute employees to ensure patients receive timely diagnostic support when needed. Under Act 390, an Arkansas law that went into effect Jan. 1, Medicaid and commercial insurance plans are required to cover lung cancer screenings for eligible individuals.

Screening is recommended for: adults ages 50 to 80 years, current smokers or former smokers who have quit within the past 15 years, adults with a smoking history of at least 20 pack-years (one pack a day for 20 years, two packs a day for 10 years, etc.), and adults with a family history of lung cancer, exposure to radon or asbestos, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Statewide maps of lung cancer incidence and mortality will guide the deployment of the vans so that the highest-need areas of the state receive priority outreach. The Cancer Institute will measure statewide impact by tracking screening participation rates, early-stage detection rates and reductions in late-state diagnoses.

Jeff Pasquale, CEO of USA Mobile Medical said, "We are proud to partner with UAMS on this groundbreaking initiative to support their mission of meeting patients where they are and ensuring access to lifesaving lung cancer screening directly to the communities throughout the state of Arkansas that need it the most."

For more than 16 years, the UAMS MammoVan has provided breast cancer screenings across the state. To further expand access to care, UAMS has launched a second MammoVan with plans to deploy a third, creating more opportunities for patients to access life-saving cancer screenings closer to home.

UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Unveils State's First Lung Screening Fleet

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When fully implemented, the Cancer Institute's mobile cancer screening fleet will include six vans, making it the largest in the United States.

Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock Honored With Governor's Quality Award at Achievement Level



Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock has received the 2026 Arkansas Governor's Quality Award at the Achievement Level from the Arkansas Institute for Performance Excellence (AIPE), recognizing its commitment to quality, continuous improvement, and performance excellence.

The Achievement Level recognizes organizations with well-deployed, systematic processes and a growing record of data-driven improvement.

The award was presented on Thursday, Oct. 29, at the 32nd Annual Governor's Quality Award Celebration at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock. The recognition marks the hospital's advancement from the Commitment Award level it earned in 2025 and the Challenge Award level in 2024.

"This recognition is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our entire staff. Participating in the Governor's Quality Award process challenged us to rigorously evaluate our operations and identify meaningful ways to elevate patient care, and we are incredibly proud of the continuous improvements our team has achieved for the North Little Rock community," said Cody Walker, president of Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock.

Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock became part of Baptist Health in 1962 and has served patients at its current location off Interstate 40, Exit 156, since 1999. The nationally recognized, faith-based hospital has 225 licensed beds and offers comprehensive services delivered in an inviting, less institutionalized setting.

Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock's Emergency Department is a Level III trauma center, which means it has demonstrated the ability to provide advanced trauma life support (ATLS) prior to the transfer of patients to a higher-level trauma center.

"Earning a Governor's Quality Award at any level takes real commitment," said Trish Villines, Executive Director of the Arkansas Institute for Performance Excellence. "Baptist Health Medical Center-North Little Rock took an honest look at how it operates, used examiner feedback to get better, and invested in its people and processes. That work strengthens not only the organization, but the people and communities it serves. We're proud to recognize their progress and look forward to seeing where their excellence journey leads next."



Baptist Health to Offer Free Community Flu Shots Across Local Wellness Centers This November

Baptist Health Community Outreach is providing free flu vaccinations to community members at several locations throughout central Arkansas during the month of November.

Dunbar Community Center (1001 W 16th St, Little Rock, AR 72202)Friday, Nov. 20, from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Southwest Community Center (6401 Baseline Rd, Little Rock, AR 72209) Thursday, Nov. 19, from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Mt.Tabor Methodist Church (4100 AR-89, Cabot, AR 72023) Thursday, Nov. 19, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Nixon Library (703 W Main St, Jacksonville, AR 72076) Thursday, Nov. 12, from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

For a full list of Baptist Health Community Outreach events, visit Baptist-Health.org.

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Penni and Richard F. Jacobs, M.D., Gift $1 Million to Support Scholarships in UAMS College of Medicine

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) received a $1 million estate gift from Penni and Richard F. Jacobs, M.D., professor emeritus and former chair of the UAMS Department of Pediatrics, to create the Richard and Margaret Revocable Trust to support the UAMS College of Medicine's scholarship program.

The trust, which will become the Robert F. Jacobs Trust once the estate funds are received by UAMS, will establish the Richard F. Jacobs, M.D., Endowed Scholarship in the UAMS College of Medicine, support the College of Medicine Class of 1977 Scholarship, and aid the UAMS Pediatrics Scholarship Initiative.

"Something that truly makes UAMS special is the continued support we receive from those who we consider part of our UAMS family — Penni and Dick Jacobs certainly embody this sentiment, possessing great leadership, and sincere generosity, which will support so many within our institution," said UAMS Chancellor C. Lowry Barnes, M.D. "Scholarships are becoming an ever-increasing important tool in supporting healthcare in Arkansas, and I am pleased to see many of our former colleagues and alumni understand the importance of philanthropy in creating future doctors at UAMS."

The Richard F. Jacobs, M.D., Endowed Scholarship will support College of Medicine students in alignment with the greatest needs and opportunities for scholarships at UAMS with preference to support one student for multiple years.

The Pediatrics Scholarship Initiative is a UAMS program that awards fourth-year medical students who are pursuing careers in pediatric care with an initial $5,000 scholarship, and an additional award for College of Medicine graduates who match with and train in the UAMS Pediatrics Residency Program at Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH). With the growth of the fund, the awards will increase.

"It was a great pleasure, a truly wonderful experience, to work in the Department of Pediatrics, not only in teaching future doctors and guiding young physicians, but doing all of it while caring for children," said Richard Jacobs. "It also just makes sense to us to give these students a little incentive to study medicine at UAMS, and hopefully they will stay in Arkansas to practice."

"Because of our relationship with UAMS, we've had very meaningful and rewarding lives, and it is out of this sense of gratitude that we felt compelled to support the future of UAMS," added Penni Jacobs. "What a wonderful thing to do, to make such a big difference in the lives of these students."

Richard Jacobs grew up in Longview, Texas, and Penni Jacobs in Little Rock. They met while attending Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and were married in 1973. He graduated from the UAMS College of Medicine in 1977, and she finished her undergraduate degree at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Richard Jacobs joined the UAMS Department of Pediatrics in 1982, caring for patients at UAMS and ACH. He became chief of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases section in 1989. He was the Horace C. Cabe Professor of Pediatrics at ACH from 1993 to 2005. Jacobs became chair of pediatrics in 2006 and was invested in the Robert H. Fiser Jr., M.D., Endowed Chair in Pediatrics in 2008. He served as president of the Arkansas Children's Research Institute from 2004 to 2015. In 2016, he received the College of Medicine's Distinguished Alumnus Award. He retired in 2017.

"I've known Penni and Dick for many years, and I understand how deeply they care for UAMS, the education of young people, and the well-being of children," said Ron D. Robertson, M.D., dean of the College of Medicine. "This gift is especially meaningful to me considering that I was a colleague with Dr. Jacobs for many years, seeing first-hand his professionalism and thoughtfulness. It must be inspiring to know that a place you've dedicated so much time and cared for so many people will live on through the education and care of others."