

Sharing Current Practices in Population Health at AMC

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The problem addressed by the initiative: The UAMS Office of Population Health (OPH) serves the entire state of Arkansas, which ranks among other Southern states as experiencing the most significant health disparities related to race, ethnicity, and rurality for a multitude of health outcomes. While our academic health system has facilities in regions across the state, the capacity needed to reach remote populations is limited. The purpose of the UAMS OPH's new mobile unit is to extend UAMS services to rural, underserved areas of the state with a focus on vulnerable populations.

A description of how the initiative was implemented: The pandemic presented opportunities for our health system's partners to offer support in the form of donations, including a mobile van to deploy around the state for COVID-19 testing. The UAMS OPH is building a statewide COVID-19 testing program and leveraging the mobile unit resources to achieve strategic priorities in addressing health disparities and health outcomes for rural, underserved areas of Arkansas.

Achieved or intended outcomes: The UAMS OPH's mobile unit aims to 1) Expand COVID-19 testing in counties/communities of high need/risk; 2) Promote healthy and active lifestyle in counties with the highest rate of obesity and diabetes; 3) Ensure that all Arkansans have access to recommended vaccinations; 4) Identify and address social determinants of health (SDOH) needs through screening and closed-loop referrals in local communities.

Lessons learned: Quickly staffing the new mobile unit with program/clinical staff required coordination and patience; the demand for testing around the state exceeded our capacity initially. In addition to permanent staffing, transitioning from a COVID-response emergency model to a sustainable model included creating standard operating procedures with "room to grow" to expand to other population health priorities including vaccination, disease screening, and health promotion.