

1 State of Arkansas  
2 94th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2023

SR 58

4  
5 By: Senator Hester  
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7 **SENATE RESOLUTION**

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

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13 **Subtitle**

14 TO COMMEMORATE THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
15 OF THE REGIONAL CAMPUSES OPERATED BY THE  
16 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL  
17 SCIENCES.  
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19 WHEREAS, Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) were first  
20 conceptualized in the United States in the early 1970s after decades of  
21 physician shortages in rural communities; and  
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23 WHEREAS, AHECs were developed as satellite educational programs that  
24 were extensions of, but at a distance from, major academic medical center  
25 campuses; and  
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27 WHEREAS, in 1972, the “Arkansas Plan for Primary Health Care” was  
28 created by a select committee of legislators and leaders from the University  
29 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) appointed by then Governor Dale  
30 Bumpers; and  
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32 WHEREAS, the Arkansas Plan for Primary Health Care proposed the  
33 establishment of AHECs in Arkansas as a “University Medical Center without  
34 walls” and Governor Bumpers viewed these rural-based AHECs as a “key step  
35 towards bringing health care services, training, and providers closer to  
36 Arkansans in every region of the state”; and



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2           WHEREAS, until Arkansas AHECs were created, the only residency  
3 positions open to medical graduates in the state were in Little Rock and  
4 state retention rates for UAMS graduates prior to AHECs were around forty  
5 percent (40%), and most who remained in-state stayed in central Arkansas; and  
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7           WHEREAS, the AHEC network was a legislative response to the nationally  
8 accepted premise that health professionals usually established practices in  
9 the areas where they completed postgraduate training; and  
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11           WHEREAS, in 1973, the General Assembly authorized and appropriated one  
12 million dollars (\$1,000,000) to establish Arkansas AHECs that would train  
13 more primary care physicians, retain more UAMS College of Medicine graduates  
14 to practice in Arkansas, and improve the geographic distribution of  
15 physicians within the state; and  
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17           WHEREAS, Arkansas became one of the first states in the nation to  
18 develop AHECs as a state-supported approach to enhancing primary care access  
19 in rural, underserved communities; and  
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21           WHEREAS, the Arkansas AHEC network was initially comprised of six (6)  
22 centers distributed around the state; and  
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24           WHEREAS, each center served multiple surrounding counties such that  
25 seventy-four (74) of seventy-five (75) counties were supported by an AHEC;  
26 and  
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28           WHEREAS, the original AHECs were located in El Dorado, Pine Bluff, Fort  
29 Smith, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, and Texarkana and subsequently, AHECs were  
30 opened in Helena-West Helena, Batesville and Magnolia; and  
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32           WHEREAS, all six (6) original centers were open by 1976, with all  
33 establishing family medicine residencies by AHECs 20th anniversary in 1993;  
34 and  
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36           WHEREAS, as services expanded, UAMS transitioned its centers to be

1 named Regional Campuses; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Arkansas counties completed their training at a UAMS Regional Campuses  
2 program, and thousands of multidisciplinary Health Professions students and  
3 tens of thousands of high school and college students have been encouraged to  
4 pursue health careers through experiences at these Regional Campuses; and  
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6 WHEREAS, UAMS Regional Campuses provide comprehensive primary care  
7 services to thousands of Arkansans each year in their clinics, and Regional  
8 Campus faculty, trainees and staff are also active members of their  
9 communities, providing leadership and significant outreach activities across  
10 their regions, including health screenings, rural health research, mobile  
11 outreach clinics, telehealth services, support groups, educational programs,  
12 library services, and many other health-related activities; and  
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14 WHEREAS, local support, including from partnering physicians and  
15 hospitals, has been invaluable in building a strong community base for UAMS  
16 Regional Campuses to thrive; and  
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18 WHEREAS, Arkansas received its first federal AHEC grant from the Health  
19 Resources and Services Administration in 1986 and since that time, UAMS  
20 Regional Campuses faculty and staff have successfully competed for millions  
21 of dollars of federal grant funds to support its primary care training  
22 programs and its long-term workforce pipeline programs, such as CHAMPS and  
23 M\*A\*S\*H summer camps for middle and high school students, respectively; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, working through strategic partnerships, UAMS Regional Campuses  
26 will continue to identify and address healthcare workforce supply and  
27 distribution needs, and to help ensure that all Arkansans have access to high  
28 quality, patient-centered primary care services and well-trained providers in  
29 every region of our state,  
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31 NOW THEREFORE,  
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33 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
34 STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
35

36 THAT the Senate celebrate the 50th anniversary of UAMS Regional

1 Campuses.

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

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