



**Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Inc.  
Arkansas Primary Care Association**

*"To equip, unify, and advocate for an innovative network  
that provides exceptional health care to all."*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Inc., and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Secure \$17.5 Million Grant to Combat Prenatal Inequities**

Little Rock, AR – In a monumental achievement for healthcare research and equity, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) has approved a groundbreaking \$17.5 million funding award for a pioneering research study aimed at addressing and reducing prenatal inequities. This transformative initiative is a collaborative effort between Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Inc. (CHCA) and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS).

Prenatal inequities have long been a significant concern in healthcare, particularly impacting underserved communities. This grant represents a significant step towards understanding and eliminating the disparities that affect expectant mothers and their babies. The PCORI funding will support a comprehensive, community-engaged research study designed to make a lasting impact on maternal and child health outcomes.

The study's principal investigators, Dr. Lanita White from CHCA and Dr. Pearl McElfish from UAMS, are leading this ambitious project, bringing together a team of experts and partners from diverse fields. Their research will encompass a wide range of factors contributing to prenatal inequities, including access to care, socio-economic determinants, racial disparities, food insecurity, transportation, and the impact of social support networks. These are all factors that can contribute to excessive gestational weight gain (EGWG)

The goal of the proposed study, "Delivering HOPE (Helping Women Optimize Prenatal Equity)," is to compare the effectiveness of two intervention methods, Delivering HOPE and Enhanced Standard of Care (ESoC), on maternal health outcomes.

"We are thrilled and deeply grateful for the support from PCORI, which recognizes the urgency of addressing prenatal inequities," said Dr. White, Principal Investigator at CHCA. "This funding allows us to embark on a transformative journey to improve the lives of mothers and their newborns, particularly in underserved communities. Our partnership with UAMS strengthens our collective expertise and resources to make meaningful strides in this critical area of healthcare."

Dr. McElfish, Principal Investigator at UAMS, expressed optimism about the partnership and the potential impact of the study. "This grant will empower us to delve deep into the complex issues surrounding prenatal inequities and develop evidence-based strategies to address them effectively. Our collaboration with CHCA underscores our commitment to serving our community and advancing equitable healthcare."

The \$17.5 million PCORI grant represents a significant investment in research that promises to shape the future of prenatal care and maternal-child health outcomes. The research study is expected to span multiple years and involve extensive data collection, analysis, and community interventions.

The award has been approved pending completion of a business and programmatic review by PCORI staff and issuance of a formal award contract. The study, which was selected through a highly competitive review process in which patients, caregivers and other stakeholders joined scientists to evaluate the proposals, will involve an initial feasibility phase to maximize the likelihood of full trial success.

About CHCA: Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Inc. (CHCA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the community health centers that are improving access to high-quality healthcare services for underserved communities in Arkansas. CHCA supports a network of community health centers that provide comprehensive primary care, dental, behavioral health, and other vital services to patients in need.

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