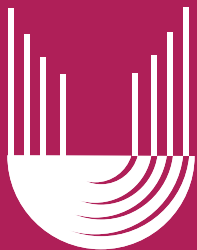


# THE GOLD STANDARD

A PUBLICATION OF ARKANSAS UROLOGY NOVEMBER 2022



## **SERVICE WITH A SMILE**

MATT HARRIS AND TEAM FURTHER  
ARKANSAS UROLOGY'S CULTURE  
OF CUSTOMER SERVICE



We are excited to be sharing with you our fourth edition of Arkansas

Urology Foundation Magazine. In this issue, we turn our attention this edition to the often-unseen heroes in the delivery of health care here at Arkansas Urology, namely, our dedicated contact center, schedulers and triage support teams.

Each and every working day, Arkansas Urology receives over 1,200 phone calls from patients, referring physicians and hospitals. That is a lot of phone calls to manage. In addition, on any given day during the week, Arkansas Urology physicians will provide care to over 500 patients in our clinics, surgery center, cancer center or partner hospitals. The waiting list to get in to see a urologist varies, but new patients sometimes may wait up to two weeks or longer for an appointment.

In Arkansas, there are roughly 60 practicing urologists in Arkansas caring for over 3 million people, or roughly two urologists per 100,000 residents, people, roughly half the national average. Fortunately, if you read one of our previous issues, you know that Advanced Practice Providers (Advanced Practice Nurses and Physician Assistants) help support urology care to our 18 physicians at Arkansas Urology to expedite care.

Arkansas Urology is continuing to find ways to enhance your patient experience as well as provide easier access to our clinical teams. We have recently upgraded our phone system with new features that should provide a shorter phone tree and more interaction to direct our patients to the most appropriate staff to handle our patients' needs. We have upgraded our website with additional information and are exploring a phone app to allow for one-touch service to our clinical/business staff.

AU will continue to bring cutting-edge technology and services to improve our delivery and access as demand continues to grow. We cannot thank you, our patients, enough for your patience and understanding as we find better ways to deliver the top-notch care you've come to expect.

*E. Scot Davis*

E. Scot Davis, MPA, MBA, CMPE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Arkansas Urology

## MEET OUR PHYSICIANS



Caleb Bozeman, MD



Adam Childs, MD



Kevin Claybrook, MD



Adam Cole, MD



David Coussens, MD



Richard D'Anna, MD



Edwin Diaz, MD, MBA



Scott Ferguson, MD



Tim Goodson, MD



Jonathan Henderson, MD





Lauren Hendrix, MD



Gerald "Jay" Heulitt, MD



Brad Houston, MD



Robbie Hurtt, MD



Gail Reede Jones, MD



Matthew C. Kincade, MD, MHA, FACS



Ronald Kuhn, MD



Jeff Marotte, MD



Keith Mooney, MD



Taylor Moore, MD



Jack Wang, MD

# NO PLACE LIKE HOME

**D**r. Brad Houston may be new to Arkansas Urology, but for the third-generation urologist, it feels more like a homecoming than the start of a career. Houston grew up in Little Rock, was educated at Central Arkansas Christian, and after earning his bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas, returned to his hometown to attend medical school at UAMS.

From there, he attended the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis where he did his general surgery internship and urology specialty training. Right after which, he again returned home, this time to join Arkansas Urology's Little Rock team.

For a guy whose skill set puts him in demand nationwide, it's clear where his heart lies.

"My friends in residency would always tell me, 'Man, you bring up Arkansas quite a bit and how much you like it,'" he said. "Arkansas is just a very special place to me. I really like all the activities you can do here. There's the outdoors, there's hunting, there's fishing, there's hiking. Going up to the Buffalo River and stuff like that is always awesome.

"As for Arkansas Urology itself, I went to a couple of different groups on interviews, including one in Atlanta, and saw a big group

there. Arkansas Urology had all the facilities, all the resources and it just lined up. This is where I want to be."

Houston, 34, said his familiarity with the state and its people gives him a running start on starting his medical practice.

"I hope my personality and the type of care I want to give will make my patients feel comfortable talking to me about whatever is going on," he said. "Medically, I want to provide an environment where they feel like they're cared for and their concerns are heard. And getting out into the community is important for educating people on the importance of good urological care. I look forward to being very involved in that respect as well. ■



DR. BRAD HOUSTON



## AU Patient Access Center Struggles with Record Volumes

As our CEO mentioned in his article, demand for urological services is at an all-time high, but the addition of new urology providers isn't keeping pace. This is exacerbated by the current staffing shortages that AU, like most of our counterparts around the country, is facing.

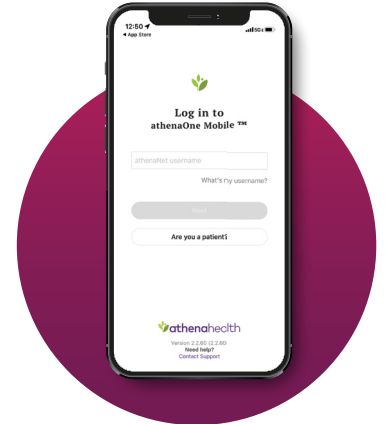
From inception, we chose to centralize our patient access center. The aim was to allow for better coverage when care teams are pulled away for duties such as: operating or rounding, remaining available to respond to phone calls and other inquiries when small

teams are impacted by vacations or illness, and standardizing the patient experience.

Although our patient access center has experienced many ebbs and flows due to staffing challenges, **we are proud that in recent months we have averaged about 1,200 calls per day, with a low abandonment rate (number of calls not being answered) of about 5%.** Stay tuned as we continue to fine-tune our processes and technology to answer calls faster and more effectively. We appreciate your patience on those days when patients require extra time or when short-staffing increases hold times.

## AU Looks to Technology to Increase Availability and Convenience

In the upcoming months, AU will roll out a newly designed mobile application. **This app will be available on Apple and Android platforms and is designed to provide a central repository for all communications available to patients.** Presently, patients can utilize phone, text and email to pay their bill, receive test results, schedule and reschedule appointments and receive overall information. The AU app will provide shortcuts to each of these functionalities as well as housing additional information such as maps, COVID protocols, etc. Stay tuned for a QR code that links you to a download.



such as **real-time metrics** regarding the efficiency of the call center and **text capabilities** for interacting with patients who prefer this option to communicate.

Additionally, the new phone system is hosted on the cloud, allowing seamless operation during power outages, or permitting staff to work remotely when necessary.

Another valuable feature is the ability to leave a call-back number without losing your place in line. This allows us to call you back based on the order we received your call. Lastly, we are very excited to announce that IVR (interactive voice recognition) is now available. When calling Arkansas Urology, the system is capable of recognizing and enacting verbal commands such as "nurse," "scheduling," "rescheduling" or "prescription." Give it a try to avoid the phone tree!

## AU Launches new Phone System to Enhance Reliability

In keeping with our commitment to reduce hold times and avoid abandoned calls, **Arkansas Urology launched a new phone system, powered by Vonage. This gives our Patient Contact Center enhanced capabilities**





## FEATURE

# MAJOR ENDORSEMENTS

## GOVERNOR AND MAYORS GET BEHIND PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS



Political leaders used their respective forums to help publicize the importance of prostate health, many coinciding with Arkansas Urology's annual Kickoff to Men's Health event, featuring free prostate screenings throughout the month of September.

"We have always said education and awareness are critically important in driving men's health care," said Scot Davis, Arkansas Urology CEO. "We are pleased to be joined in this effort by political leaders as a way to reinforce messages on the importance of prostate health, including getting the kind of annual exams we offer through Kickoff to Men's Health."

Governor Asa Hutchinson kicked off the effort with a proclamation over the summer, declaring September to be National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month in Arkansas.

"National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month has been proclaimed in the past for all men," the document reads. "African American men are more likely to develop prostate cancer, and in Arkansas, 2.6 times more likely to

die than Caucasian men.

"Increased awareness, timely and appropriate detection and improved treatment practices are essential in controlling prostate cancer ... I urge all men to become aware of the risks of prostate cancer and talk to their health care providers about being screened for this life-altering disease."

As Kickoff to Men's Health events came to Little Rock, Bentonville, Pine Bluff, El Dorado and North Little Rock during September, several mayors also officially commented on the importance of advance detection.

"We all have amazing, important men in our lives, so we want to make sure to take advantage of the free screenings," said El Dorado Mayor Veronica Smith-Creer, who also issued a proclamation similar to the governor's.

"Make sure that you're doing everything you can to live a long life, to have a lot of time with your family ... Early detection is so important, and that's what happens at these screenings. Traditionally, it's for men from age 55 to 69, but if you have a family history, you should begin as early as 40. If you fall

into that age group or fall into that family situation, the screening is so important."

This year's sentiments continue a long tradition of endorsements by mayors on the importance of prostate cancer awareness and preventative screenings. In the past Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr., Mayor Shirley Washington of Pine Bluff and former North Little Rock Mayor Joe Smith all issued proclamations similar to the governor's advocating for prostate cancer awareness, early detection and treatment.

The 2022 Kickoff to Men's Health events performed hundreds of free prostate exams across the five locations. Of these, some revealed symptoms that required further attention by physicians.

"Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers, but it's also the most treatable when caught early," said Chris Shenep, director of the Arkansas Urology Foundation. "Every year, this event catches something that would have likely gone undetected otherwise. This means every year, Kickoff to Men's Health saves lives." ■



# SERVICE SPECIALISTS

A winning team is defined by its ability to consistently execute the fundamentals flawlessly, and that's exactly the expectation Matt Harris brings to work every day. As Arkansas Urology's director of patient access, Harris is responsible for the patient experience, something for which he holds his team to a high standard.

"Arkansas Urology has gold standards for performance," he said. "I live by the gold standards, my teams live the gold standards, No. 1 and No. 2 of which are 'Walk in the patient's shoes,' and 'Do the right thing.'"



"What we live by is treating every patient the way that we would want our family treated — our mother, father, sister, brother. Anything less than that is not serving our patients."

Harris' departments include the practice's primary public-facing teams, including the call center, intake, prior authorization, cost estimation and PAs. These teams serve as the face of the practice to new and existing patients alike, so the ideals of customer service, empathy and professionalism are constantly reinforced.

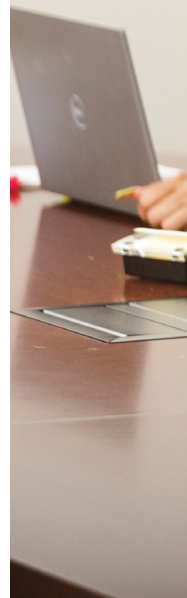
"Patient satisfaction leads to a great compliance with the physician treatment plan," Harris said. "Just that happy smiling face, in person or over the phone, sets the tone from the very beginning at the contact center through the progression of care. If there is a surgical or procedure intervention required for that patient, that is an opportunity for us to set the tone that reassures the patient."

"I mean, no one goes to the urologist because they want

to have fun, right? We want to quell their fears before they arrive so that they feel comfortable when they arrive and can communicate with their physician any of their urological medical concerns. The patient needs to get the best bang for their buck, and to do that, they need to feel free to have an open, honest conversation with their providers. We can make that difference for our patients."

Harris infuses this philosophy throughout his five departments and the 63 employees who are his responsibility, from initial training to regular feedback and daily coaching. Along with his departmental managers, he's constantly drilling down to find areas of improvement, being accountable for mistakes and applauding outstanding patient interactions.

"What I tell every employee that rolls up to me is I can teach you a lot of things, but I cannot teach you



**From the very beginning, Arkansas Urology has set out to be different from other organizations. Different in how we treat our patients, different in how we work with each other, and different in the outcomes we achieve. These differences are the foundation of our unique culture and The Gold Standards we live by every day.**





customer service. Everyone must be patient focused,” he said. “We have very good communication across Arkansas Urology to ensure we’re meeting the level of service we demand for our patients. Anything short of that is not meeting our expectations or our patients’ expectations.”

Despite the current labor shortage, Harris is equally stringent about the attributes he’s looking for in new hires.

“My managers take that up whenever they have an interview,” he said. “I let them steer the interview, but they know to include me so I can observe the candidate. I’m looking for engagement, eye contact, body language and skill base. If you’re an applicant

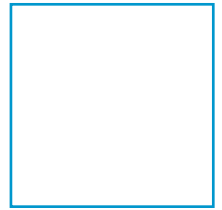


“What we live by is treating every patient the way that we would want our family treated — our mother, father, sister, brother. Anything less than that is not serving our patients.  
— Matt Harris

who’s just looking for a paycheck, you can get that down the road.”

Harris and his team are aided in their daily mission by technology that is helping streamline certain processes and increase patient convenience. But he said nothing will ever replace the kind of one-on-one human interaction he and his team strive to deliver every day.

“We hire people who are committed to our patients, who wake up every morning and come in excited to see how many patients and coworkers they can make a difference for that day,” he said. “And when we’re walking to our vehicle at the end of the day, my expectation is that all of my teams think about what we did not so well, and what we’re going to do better tomorrow.” ■



## AU FOUNDATION



by CHRIS SHENEP, Director of the  
Arkansas Urology Foundation & Marketing

# AU GIVES BACK

**"TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN ... MUCH IS EXPECTED!"**

Over the years, this quote has meant a lot to me, and it's become even more impactful as I've become an adult. We are truly fortunate in what we get to do here at Arkansas Urology, and that brings with it a responsibility to give back to the people of Arkansas and the communities we serve.

Did you know that in the course of a normal year, AU supports more than 100 nonprofit organizations? The nonprofits we support address many needs in the community, including promoting better health, combating cardiovascular disease, providing hope to cancer patients and supporting children and adults with developmental disabilities.

We have supported the Broyles Foundation, which funds research and assists caregivers of Alzheimer's patients, and the Boys and Girls Club, which provides young people with mentorship and a safe, supportive after-school environment.

In addition, our employees have supported internal efforts to collect canned food items for the Arkansas Food

Bank, made cards for patients at Arkansas Hospice, collected toys and books for holiday gift drives, and clothing and personal items for the homeless and less fortunate.

Why do all this? Simply put, it's part of the fabric of our organization and the very nature of the people who report to work here every day. Health care of any kind is a calling to serve others, and urology is no exception. Arkansas Urology was founded to improve the quality of life in Arkansas, and we do that both through our medical treatment of patients and our commitment to community organizations and events that benefit so many.

As we round the corner into the final months of the year, our thoughts turn to the many blessings each of us has, and we look forward to providing more opportunities to help those in need. I invite each of you to make this holiday season special with your continued support of these initiatives.

Reach the AU Foundation at 501-912-0763, or visit [ARKANSASUROLOGY.COM/FOUNDATION](http://ARKANSASUROLOGY.COM/FOUNDATION).



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