



**Contact:** Eileen E. Denne, [Eileen@arrx.org](mailto:Eileen@arrx.org); office 501-372-5250; cell 571-215-3759

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ARKANSAS PHARMACISTS PARTNER TO IMPROVE PATIENT ADHERENCE**

LITTLE ROCK, AR (Sept. 2, 2014) – More than 75 locally-owned community pharmacies throughout Arkansas are enhancing patient care by participating in a unique 9-month medication adherence program sponsored by the Arkansas Pharmacists Association, National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) and Pfizer.

The APA/NCPA/Pfizer Adherence Program is measuring the effectiveness of medication synchronization, which helps to improve patients' adherence to their monthly maintenance medications by filling all maintenance medications on the same day each month. In addition, the program includes frequent communications between the pharmacist and the patient to help to identify any problems with therapy, or other issues that arise such as a hospitalization, between filling cycles. The program helps to keep patients consistently taking their life-saving medications through patient counseling, synchronized refills, and refill reminders.

Each participating pharmacy in Arkansas has committed to enrolling 100 patients in the synchronization program, using technology from software vendor Prescribe Wellness. Since the program began in May 2014, 5,000 patients have been enrolled.

Many studies have shown that patients' health is improved when they take prescribed medications regularly and do not allow prescriptions to lapse. Poor medication adherence costs the healthcare system \$290 billion, according to the health policy institute Network for Excellence in Health Innovation. Sixty-nine percent of medication-related hospital admissions are due to poor adherence for patients with chronic diseases such as congestive heart failure, diabetes, hypertension and dyslipidemia.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has made adherence a key focus for pharmacies and plan sponsors by creating Medicare Part D STAR ratings, a system that measures patient adherence at the pharmacy level in several key areas. Medicare STAR ratings measure health and drug service plans that help to assess patient health; manage chronic conditions; offer drug plan customer service; address member complaints, member experience and satisfaction; ensure patient safety and accuracy of drug pricing.

At the conclusion of the APA/NCPA/Pfizer Adherence Program in February 2015, the adherence data will be analyzed for increases in adherence, decreases in health care costs and improved Medicare STAR ratings.

Patients are encouraged to contact their community pharmacy to ask whether or not they have an adherence program.

**About APA:** *The Arkansas Pharmacists Association, founded in 1882, is the statewide professional association representing approximately 2,300 pharmacists in Arkansas. APA strives to further the professional advancement of pharmacists, advocate the value of pharmacy, and safeguard the health and well-being of every Arkansan. Its mission is to advance a professional and business environment for Arkansas pharmacists to be successful and fulfilled in serving patients.*

**About NCPA:** *The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA®) represents the interests of America's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 23,000 independent community pharmacies. Together they represent an \$88.7 billion health care marketplace, dispense nearly 40% of all retail prescriptions, and employ more than 300,000 individuals, including over 62,000 pharmacists.*

**About Pfizer:** *Pfizer, Inc. is an American multinational pharmaceutical corporation headquartered in New York City, and with its research headquarters in Groton, Connecticut, United States. It is one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies by revenues.*

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417 South Victory Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-2923 Phone: 501-372-5250, Fax: 501-372-0546

[www.arrx.org](http://www.arrx.org)