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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PHARMACISTS RECOMMEND UPDATING IMMUNIZATIONS TO AVOID MEASLES OUTBREAK**

LITTLE ROCK, AR (April 9, 2014) – Measles, a disease that was considered eradicated from the U.S., is making a comeback. In 2014, there have been 84 cases of measles in 11 states. During National Public Health Week, April 7-13, the Arkansas Pharmacists Association (APA) recommends avoiding an outbreak in Arkansas by immunizing children and adults.

APA Director of Clinical Programs, Dr. Eric Crumbaugh, said “While measles are highly contagious, it is not a deadly disease. However, for someone with underlying disease such as cancer or immune system problems, it can be deadly. Also, newborn babies don’t receive the vaccine until 12 months of age. Find out if you are protected – if not for yourself, for your family.”

To avoid an outbreak of this long-eradicated disease here in Arkansas, children and adults should check with their pediatrician, physician or pharmacist about getting vaccinated. As part of their childhood immunization schedule, babies should receive the first dose at 12 to 15 months of age and a booster at four to six years of age.

Adults born before 1957 are generally considered immune. All adults born after 1957 should have documentation of at least one dose in their lifetime. Anyone traveling internationally should be vaccinated (several cases in the past have been linked to unvaccinated people traveling internationally, however not all the current cases are linked to overseas travel). One dose will protect 95 percent of people; if a patient is given two doses it is 99 percent effective. Many pharmacists offer immunizations without an appointment.

Measles immunizations are available in combination with mumps and rubeolla (the MMR vaccine). Like other vaccines, the MMR vaccine does NOT cause autism. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Danish Medical Council have followed more than 500,000 children over seven years of age and found no association between the MMR vaccine and autism. The reports that suggested a connection between MMR and autism were based on falsified data and have been pulled from the medical literature.

*The Arkansas Pharmacists Association, founded in 1882, is the statewide professional association representing approximately 2,200 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.*

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