

# AR•RX

The Arkansas Pharmacist

Special Edition  
May 2013

## 89<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

### Dear Arkansas Pharmacist,

The 89th General Assembly adjourned on April 23 and the Arkansas Pharmacists Association had a great session once again! We passed important legislation and prevented some onerous bills from being passed. At exactly 100 days, this was the longest legislative session since the 1920s. The first Republican majority since Reconstruction managed the House and Senate with good will and a lack of partisanship.

APA worked on passage of four bills and we were behind-the-scenes protecting pharmacists' interests on others. The bills which are now acts include:

**SB 968 / Act 1169.** Sen. Bruce Maloch (D-Magnolia) & Rep. Marshall Wright (D-Forrest City). Authorizes the State Medical Board to continue to regulate physician dispensing of legend drugs. (Effective immediately)

**SB 268 / Act: 176.** Sen. Jane English (R-North Little Rock) and Rep. Mark Perry (D-Jacksonville)/Rep. Stephanie Malone (R-Fort Smith). Requires active-duty military personnel identification cards to contain an ID photograph and the person's date of birth to be used to purchase pseudoephedrine.

**SB 1138 / Act: 1194.** Sen. Ronald Caldwell (R-Wynne) & Rep. David Kizzia (D-Malvern). Requires Pharmacy Benefits Manager to maintain a Maximum Allowable Cost List and make it accessible to pharmacists. (See Highlights of Maximum Allowable Cost Bill)

**HB 1185 / Act: 274.** Rep. Marshall Wright (D-Forrest City) & Senator Jonathan Dismang (R-Beebe). Authorizes pharmacists to substitute a therapeutically equivalent drug that is at a lower cost to the patient when given authorization in the prescription and after discussion with the patient.

APA would like to extend a special thanks to David Wroten and the Arkansas Medical Society for their collegiality and cooperation during the legislative session.

### Medicaid Private Option Passes

The biggest accomplishment of the 89th General Assembly was passing Medicaid expansion. On April 17, the Arkansas Senate approved the "Private Option" Medicaid expansion bill. The bill will extend medical coverage to over 200,000 Arkansans who have incomes of less than 138% of the federal poverty level. The expansion opportunity was created under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). While the ACA envisioned expansion occurring through a direct expansion of the existing Medicaid program, Arkansas legislators opted to expand using a "Private Option" where patients obtain coverage through private insurance providers instead of the state's existing Medicaid program.

The access to care for these citizens will be of tremendous benefit to our state. However, there are still many unanswered questions. APA created a list of concerns for pharmacy surrounding the private option and presented them directly to the Governor. These concerns include how reimbursement rates, pay cycles, formularies, and other issues will be managed in the private option. We'll provide an update when we receive clarification on these issues.

We thank you for your support during the session, especially for Calls to Action. Your relationship with your legislator matters. We are always most effective with your active participation in the legislative process.

Warm regards,



Mark S. Riley, Pharm.D.  
Executive Vice President

## Advocacy 101: Harding's Pharmacy Political Advocates Work to Advance the Profession

By Elizabeth Scott, Pharm.D. Candidate Class of 2015

In August 2012, the Harding Political Advocacy class began under the direction of Dr. Rodney Richmond, Associate Professor, Pharmacy Practice. Early in the semester, advocacy students met with Drs. Mark Riley and Scott Pace of the APA to discuss current pharmacy issues. One topic discussed was the redefinition of a prescription. The students saw this as an achievable advancement in pharmacy practice, and were immediately on board.

While the APA was drafting the legal wording of the bill, the students were conducting research and developing a white paper in its support. Next, the students set up multiple meetings with state legislators, educating them on the topic and gaining support. The students hosted a "Dinner with the Legislators" event on campus, which created a forum for dialogue between community pharmacists, pharmacy students, the APA, and local legislators regarding the bill.

The APA worked around the clock to finalize bill wording, then brought the students up to speed on the changes. The students conducted final meetings with legislators to update them and further solidify their support.

On Jan. 28, HB1185 was filed. From there, the students reached out to their College of Pharmacy in a grassroots effort to get them involved in assisting with an email campaign, expanding awareness and procuring House and Senate committee and floor votes. The students attended the Feb. 14 meeting of the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee where HB1185 passed unanimously. The House floor passed HB1185 unopposed on Feb. 18.



*HUCOP students Abby Cooper and Tyler Staten greet Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe at the Governor's office.*

On Feb. 20, the students attended the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee meeting, with students Abby Cooper and Tyler Staten testifying for HB1185. The

committee passed HB1185 with token opposition, as did the full Senate on Feb. 25. The students joined the APA on March 1, and watched as Gov. Mike Beebe signed HB1185, declaring it Act 274.



*Governor Mike Beebe signing HB1185. (L to R) Bill's sponsor, Rep. Marshall Wright (D-Forrest City), HUCOP Advocacy Class members Tyler Staten, Abby Cooper, Chris Hill, Kejal Patel, Dr. Rodney Richmond, APA's Dr. Mark Riley and Debra Wolfe.*

## Pharmacists to Host June 25 Fundraiser for Mike Ross



Former Congressman Mike Ross announced his intention to run for governor in his hometown of Prescott on April 17. APA plans to hold a fundraiser for Mike Ross' gubernatorial race on Tuesday, June 25 from 7-9 p.m. at LaVada's, 205 Main Street, North Little Rock 72114.

Mike and his wife Holly previously owned Holly's Healthmart in Prescott. Holly is a pharmacist and long-time APA member who currently works at Cantrell Drug. If you were planning to support his campaign, we'd appreciate you sending your check to the APA office to be given to Mike as a group at the event.

We look forward to seeing you there!



## APA's 2013 Legislative Reception Attracts Legislators and Pharmacists to Trapnall Hall



*APA's Debra Wolf, Reps. Sheila Lampkin, Stephen Magie.*



*Speaker Davy Carter and Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson.*



*Reps. Micah Neal and Randy Alexander.*



*Rep. Marshall Wright and APA's Mark Riley.*



*Rep. John Eubanks and Sen. Bruce Holland.*



*Reps. David Kizzia, Marshall Wright, and former Sen. Percy Malone.*



*Keith Larkin and Rep. George McGill.*



*Rep. Justin Harris and Justin Boyd.*



A strong Arkansas Pharmacists Political Action Committee (AP-PAC) will demonstrate our ardent participation in the political process and allow pharmacists to effectively support pro-pharmacy legislators. It will also show our opponents that pharmacy is a strong political voice. The combination of a well-funded PAC and strong grassroots advocacy will strengthen our already formidable voice at the State Capitol. There is power in numbers, and elected officials are most sensitive to the needs of those who support and vote for them.

Take up to a \$100 credit on your Arkansas state income taxes when you make a \$100 AP-PAC contribution now! That's right, an actual tax credit, not a deduction. It's a way to contribute up to \$100 without costing you a dime. Take a credit of \$100 if you file a joint return and \$50 if you file a single return.\*

Your AP-PAC contributions support pharmacy-friendly state legislators and is greatly appreciated! Please fill out the information and check your giving level below.

YES! I will be a \$100 contributor. ☐ \$100 (OR) I will contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Security code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle One:** VISA MasterCard American Express Discover

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Consult your tax professional for details.*

Please make checks payable to: **AP-PAC • 417 South Victory • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 • (501) 372-5250**



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