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ARKANSAS PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION WINS IMMUNIZATION ACTION COALITION AWARD

LITTLE ROCK, AR (May 16, 2013) – The Arkansas Pharmacists Association’s (APA) Pharmacist Immunization Program received an Honorable Mention award from the Immunization Action Coalition in Overall Adult Immunization Activities - Beyond Flu Award, at its National Influenza Vaccine Summit (NIVS).

APA’s Immunization Grant Coordinator, Eric Crumbaugh, Pharm.D., received the award on behalf of APA on Wednesday, May 15, during the National Adult and Influenza Vaccine Summit Annual Meeting Awards Dinner Program at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. The national winners and honorable mention winners were presented with a plaque and honoraria check during the session.

The awards dinner recognized individuals and organizations that made extraordinary contributions towards improving adult and/or childhood influenza vaccination rates within their communities during the 2012-2013 influenza season. APA won honorable mention in a new award category recognizing immunization activities focused on the adult population, beyond influenza.

In 1997 the Arkansas State Legislature gave pharmacists the ability to immunize adults. Since then, local pharmacists have gradually increased the number of patients who take advantage of the convenience and ease of getting immunizations in their local community pharmacy.

In 2012 the APA partnered with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement to launch a campaign for pharmacists that addressed barriers to adult immunization and provided educational opportunities about the importance of adult vaccinations.

The APA implemented the Pharmacist Immunization Program in February 2012 with the goal of increasing pharmacist-administered adult vaccines 10 percent by August 2013. To achieve this ambitious goal, the APA took a grassroots approach. Dr. Eric Crumbaugh reached out to every pharmacy in the state to educate

pharmacists, their staff, and their patients about adult vaccines and which vaccines adults need to keep themselves, their families, and their communities healthy.

APA adopted a “no excuses” attitude toward increasing adult immunizations in the state. In order to make it easy for pharmacists participate in the immunization campaign, the APA developed original educational materials, created an “Immunization” tab on its website, created a training component for pharmacists on the Arkansas immunization registry, collaborated with the ADH on a pharmacy protocol, took initiative to form a statewide immunization coalition, which launched in September 2012, and engaged Arkansas insurance companies to talk about insurance coverage for pharmacist-administered vaccines. Results of the program will be announced shortly.

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.

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