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PHARMACIST IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM TARGETS INCREASING ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS TEN PERCENT BY 2013

LITTLE ROCK, AR (March 26, 2012) – A new Pharmacist Immunization Program is intended to help prevent illness among adults in Arkansas. The state was awarded a \$1.8 million cooperative agreement from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of the project is to increase adult immunizations using different healthcare settings and providers. The Arkansas Pharmacists Association will help to increase the total number of pharmacist-administered vaccines to patients and staff.

“Our goal is to increase the total number of adults immunized by pharmacists against flu and other vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Eric Crumbaugh, Pharm.D., Immunization Grant Coordinator and manager of the Pharmacist Immunization Program. “We plan to accomplish this goal by training at least 100 pharmacists on how to give vaccinations; we’ll assist pharmacies in setting up or expanding their existing immunization programs; and we will distribute educational materials to pharmacies across the state.”

A database was created in February by the Pharmacist Immunization Program of chain and independent pharmacies in Arkansas. The data indicated that 336 out of 708 retail pharmacies are currently offering pharmacist-administered vaccination services.

According to Crumbaugh, the Pharmacist Immunization Program will distribute a toolkit with all the information and documents needed to conduct these services. The toolkit will consist of sample protocols, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) documents, checklists, and immunization schedules. These materials will be made available to pharmacists by mail and online in April.

The Pharmacist Immunization Program will also survey those pharmacies that reported that they are providing immunization services to collect specifics about their programs and to measure the impact that the program can have on the number of pharmacist-administered vaccines in the state.

The Pharmacist Immunization Program will offer two immunization training courses in the coming months. The American Pharmacists Association's "Pharmacy-Based Immunization Delivery" program will be offered to up to 100 Arkansas pharmacists at no charge. The first training course will be held June 9 at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences at Little Rock. Registration forms and information will be distributed soon to Arkansas pharmacists. Additional information can be found at <http://www.arrx.org/immunizations>.

Since 1997, pharmacists in Arkansas have been allowed to administer medications, including immunizations, with a standing order or prescription. Although pharmacists have administered thousands of vaccines, many Arkansans go unvaccinated for diseases such as influenza, pneumonia and shingles.

Crumbaugh joined APA to launch the Pharmacist Immunization Program in February. He completed his pre-pharmacy curriculum at Arkansas State University and earned his Pharm.D. from the UAMS College of Pharmacy in 2008. Most recently, Crumbaugh served as Patient Care Specialist for Kroger Pharmacy in Little Rock and a Clinical Assistant Instructor for UAMS College of Pharmacy. He provided immunization services for patients at Kroger since 2007 and started the first pharmacist-run International Travel Medicine Clinic in Arkansas.

Crumbaugh has been a leader in pharmacist-administered immunizations throughout his career. He was recently named the first pharmacist member of the Vaccine Medication Advisory Committee for Arkansas. He is also a member of the Arkansas Medicaid's Drug Utilization Review Committee.

Crumbaugh was named winner of the 2011 Innovative Pharmacy Practice Award by the APA. He previously received the Public Health Pharmacy Practice Award from the U.S. Public Health Service. Crumbaugh was also an Association for Prevention Teaching and Research Paul Ambrose Scholar.

The Arkansas Pharmacists Association, founded in 1882, is the statewide professional association representing approximately 2,400 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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