



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PHARMACISTS INCREASE ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS UP TO 300% IN 2012-2013**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR (May 23, 2013)** – The Arkansas Pharmacists Association’s (APA) Pharmacist Immunization Program between March 2012 and February 2013 increased the number of vaccinations administered in Arkansas pharmacies by 80 to 300 percent over the previous year. Compared to the previous year (March 2011 to February 2012), the number of pharmacist-administered immunizations for influenza increased 80 percent, pneumonia increased 114 percent, and shingles increased almost 300 percent.

**Total Number of Vaccines Given by Pharmacists**

<b>Vaccine</b>	<b>Administered Mar. 1, 2011- Feb. 29, 2012</b>	<b>Administered March 1, 2012 – Feb. 28, 2013</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>
Influenza	74,863	134,535	<b>79.71%</b>
Pneumonia	2,819	6,030	<b>113.91%</b>
Zoster (for Shingles)	5,755	22,919	<b>298.25%</b>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>83,437</b>	<b>163,484</b>	

In 2012 the state of Arkansas was awarded a \$1.8 million cooperative agreement grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal of the cooperative agreement was to increase the number of adults immunized using different healthcare settings and providers. APA was chosen as executor of part of the cooperative agreement and partnered with the CDC, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), and the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) to launch a campaign to encourage pharmacists to start or expand their immunization services and to educate pharmacists and the general public about the importance of adult vaccinations. APA hired Eric Crumbaugh, Pharm.D., to implement the program and to increase pharmacist-administered adult vaccines 10 percent by August 2013.

Dr. Crumbaugh reached out to the 747 retail pharmacies in the state to educate pharmacists, their staffs and patients about adult vaccines and which vaccines adults need to keep themselves, their families, and their communities healthy. In order to make it easy for pharmacists participate in the immunization campaign, 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.

More than 110 pharmacists in Arkansas took a required CPR class and eight hours of training to learn how to administer immunizations during four free training opportunities in 2012 and 2013. Each of the retail pharmacies that requested them received a 12-page immunization Toolkit, a 4 x 5 “We Vaccinate” window cling to go on pharmacy doors, 200 personal immunization record cards for patients and were encouraged to contact Dr. Crumbaugh with questions. Pharmacists were also sent 8 x 10 color posters promoting immunizations for flu, pneumonia, whooping cough and shingles to place prominently in their stores.

In addition, APA launched an awareness campaign that included local media outreach to help educate adult Arkansans on the need to become immunized for flu, pneumonia, whooping cough and shingles.

The program received an Honorable Mention award in “Overall Adult Immunization Activities - Beyond Flu”; at the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit (NAIIS) on May 15. The NAIIS is led by the Immunization Action Coalition, the CDC, and the National Vaccine Program Office. The award 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. Arkansas citizens in rural areas often lack access to primary care screenings and other services. There is a pharmacy in 74 of the 75 Arkansas counties, where pharmacists may provide vaccines.

*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.*

###