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PHARMACISTS SAY ENDING PRIVATE OPTION BAD PUBLIC POLICY

LITTLE ROCK, AR (Feb. 3, 2014) – Members of the Arkansas Pharmacists Association (APA) say they do not believe it is good public policy for the state to eliminate health insurance coverage to individuals with incomes of up to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level after June 30, 2014, only six months after the “private option” began.

More than three-fourths (77 percent) of those surveyed said they think eliminating the “private option” for Medicaid Expansion would be bad public policy, despite an initial lack of support for reforming the healthcare system when the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was passed in 2010.

During the month of January, more than half (51 percent) of the pharmacists who responded to the survey said they filled prescriptions or provided services to a patient because of the “private option”.

The results represent a significant shift in attitude from the time the ACA was passed by Congress and signed by the President in 2010 to extend healthcare coverage to 45 million uninsured Americans, including 500,000 Arkansans. About 63 percent characterized their attitudes at that time as skeptical or pessimistic while 24.3 percent said they were hopeful or excited about passage of the ACA.

Their responses demonstrate optimism for Arkansas’s “private option” solution to healthcare reform. In the survey, 46 percent of the respondents said the Arkansas legislature should vote to continue the private option after the current fiscal year ends in June 2014. Among the other respondents, 28.9 percent said the “private option” should end and 25.1 percent said they don’t know.

The APA survey was distributed in late January to 1,847 pharmacists. The response rate was 235 with the margin of error at +/-6 percent.

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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