



**News Release
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**ACHI Receives \$407,000 Grant to Continue
Study of State’s Uninsured Population**

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LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) has received a \$407,136 State Planning Grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to continue its study of the health insurance status of Arkansans and to develop options to expand coverage for the uninsured.

In 2000, Arkansas was one of the first states to receive a HRSA grant to study health insurance. As the state’s designated lead agency, ACHI conducted the first Arkansas Household Survey of Health Insurance Status in 2001, which provided detailed information that was not and is still not available through federal reporting agencies or other national data sources.

*ACHI’s mission
is to be a catalyst for
improving the health
of Arkansans through
evidence-based research,
public issue advocacy,
and collaborative
program development.*

ACHI’s Arkansas Health Insurance Expansion Initiative Roundtable was established the same year with the specific goals of stabilizing and expanding health insurance coverage in the state by evaluating health care financing options. The Roundtable, which consists of 21 private-citizen members representing employers, consumers, and providers/health insurers, wrote a report based on the 2001 survey results. The report also included the Roundtable’s recommendations for coverage expansion options, including support for local employer-based health insurance purchasing groups and expanded Medicaid eligibility for low-income pregnant women.

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During the past year, ACHI conducted a second HRSA-funded Arkansas Household Survey of Health Insurance Status. The *2005 Arkansas Fact Book: A Profile of the Uninsured*, published in September, provides data on how many Arkansans currently lack health insurance coverage, identifies gaps that exist in sources of health insurance, and puts a face on the state's uninsured.

“Our study estimated that in 2004 about 455,000 Arkansans of all ages were uninsured. The study also demonstrated that lack of health insurance affects all segments of the state's population, including men and women of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, financial status, employment status, and geographic region,” said Kevin Ryan, JD, MA, Associate Director for Policy and Projects at ACHI and Assistant Professor at the UAMS College of Public Health.

The new HRSA State Planning Grant award will allow ACHI and the Arkansas Health Insurance Expansion Initiative Roundtable to continue investigating options for expanding health insurance coverage for Arkansans and to create a long-term state-specific strategic plan for health insurance and health care.

ACHI is a non-partisan, independent health policy center whose mission is to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of Arkansans through evidence-based research, public issue advocacy and collaborative program development.

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