

News Release

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ARKANSAS CENTER FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT RECEIVES \$200,000 GRANT TO DEVELOP OPTIONS FOR INCREASING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE IN ARKANSAS

Little Rock, Ark. (February 14, 2008) – A \$200,000 grant was awarded to the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as part of the Foundation’s State Coverage Initiatives (SCI) program.

The program seeks to help states develop and implement policies that expand access to health insurance coverage in order to reduce the number of uninsured. SCI provides states with technical assistance and financial support to assist them as they develop and refine health care reform strategies and implement them.

With the support of Governor Mike Beebe, ACHI applied for the grant to fund efforts to identify, develop and implement achievable strategies to improve health, deliver needed health care and enhance both worker productivity and the business climate.

Governor Beebe said, “As a state we must focus on improving access to affordable, high-quality, evidence-based health care for all Arkansans. Reaching this goal will not only improve the health of our citizens, but also increase educational achievement and create a more productive workforce.”

Dr. Joe Thompson, ACHI Director and Surgeon General for the State of Arkansas, points to implementation of the Governor’s Roundtable on Health Care as a step in that direction. He said, “By convening the Roundtable and supporting ACHI’s proposal for the SCI grant, Governor Beebe is helping to assure that Arkansas develops a workable health care reform strategy and that we are positioned to take advantage of future opportunities both at the federal and state level.”

(MORE)

ACHI is a nonpartisan, independent, health policy center that serves as a catalyst to improve the health of Arkansans.



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Staffed by ACHI, the Roundtable consists of 31 non-governmental individuals from across the state representing the health, health care, business and consumer sectors. The group meets bimonthly with a mission of identifying achievable strategies to improve health through better access to health care.

Past health insurance expansion grants received by ACHI resulted in the first survey of Arkansas families to assess health insurance status among Arkansans, conducted in 2001 and again in 2004, with results published in the *2005 Arkansas Fact Book: A Profile of the Uninsured*. In addition, ARHealthNetworks, a health benefits program for low-income workers of small Arkansas businesses, was developed through work funded by a Health Resources and Services Administration State Planning Grant.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information visit www.rwjf.org.

ACHI is a nonpartisan, independent health policy center dedicated to improving the health of Arkansans. It is jointly supported by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the Arkansas Department of Human Services and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield. For more information visit www.achi.net.

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