



ACHI

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ARKANSAS CENTER FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT AWARDED \$425,000 HRSA STATE PLANNING GRANT Funds will be used to continue a study of the health insurance status of Arkansans

LITTLE ROCK, AR (Oct. 18, 2004) – The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement has received a \$426,521 State Planning Grant Continuation Award from the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to continue a study of the health insurance status of Arkansans and potential coverage options. “The HRSA grant will allow further research of health care options for the 400,000 Arkansans who currently have no coverage of any kind, although most work at least one, if not two, full time jobs,” said Kevin Ryan, J.D., M.A., Associate Director for Policy and Projects at ACHI and Assistant Professor at the UAMS College of Public Health .

In 2000, Arkansas was one of the first states to receive grant funds from this Federal State Planning Grant program. During 2000-2001, ACHI, as the designated lead agency, coordinated collection and analysis of data on the state’s health insurance marketplace through key informant interviews with large-employer and insurance company representatives; focus groups with small employers and families; and surveys of Arkansas households. Employing this 2000-2001 data, the Center has drawn a detailed picture of health insurance status of Arkansans that has provided valuable information to state and Federal policy makers on the nature of insured and uninsured populations in the state.

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Improving health through evidence-based research, program development, and public issue advocacy.

A Partnership of: Arkansas Department of Health • University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences • Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield

Using funds from the original State Planning Grant and employing additional funds awarded from the Robert Wood Johnson State Coverage Initiative Demonstration Grant program, ACHI formed the Arkansas Health Insurance Policy Roundtable. This Roundtable was established to study the collected data, and guide the development of viable solutions for expanding insurance coverage in Arkansas while simultaneously enhancing marketplace stability. Comprised of business, insurance industry and healthcare leaders as well as consumers and healthcare advocates, the Roundtable is charged with meeting regularly to propose strategic health policies for Arkansas.

The interviews, survey and focus groups conducted in 2000-2001 yielded information on a number of key parameters for Arkansas families including; employment status, length of time with and without insurance, household composition, access to care, service use, and economics and socio-demographic characteristics associated with health insurance status as well as regional and state-level assessments. This data was used by the Roundtable to craft health insurance expansion recommendations and project potential impact of these options.

ACHI has published a comprehensive insurance report that summarizes the information collected by the organization as well as from other sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau. The most recent Arkansas Health Insurance Roundtable Report can be found at www.achi.net.

This new grant award will allow ACHI to continue data collection in 2004 and 2005. Analyses of this current information and comparison to previously collected data will allow the Center to create a comprehensive overview of the state of Arkansas' uninsured population. Importantly, this overview will provide current and accurate information to health policy developers at state agencies, businesses and insurance providers.

According to ACHI's latest data from 2002, more than 15 percent of the state's citizens lack health coverage. Sixty-eight percent of uninsured adults are employed and 54 percent work at least 35 hours a week.

Founded in 1998, 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 is a non-partisan organization funded in part by the Arkansas Department of Health, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas and Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield.

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