



Media Release

Contact:

**Amy Webb, Director of Communications
(501) 682-8650**

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2014 Data Shows Private Option Enrollments Growing in Every County

The first county-level review of “Private Option” data in 2014 shows widespread enrollment with hundreds, and in many cases thousands, of people in each county now getting health care coverage under the new program, according to information released by the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) on Friday.

“There’s a great deal of interest in the Private Option, and we are beginning to analyze enrollment data to give people a better sense of who is participating,” said DHS Director John Selig. “From this initial data it’s clear that across the state, no matter where you live, people need and appreciate the opportunity to finally get health insurance.”

In all, 75,832 people had gained health care coverage through the Private Option as of Friday. Coverage under the Private Option (formally known as the Health Care Independence Program) began Jan. 1. Of those enrolled so far, 68,434 were covered by a private health insurance plan and 7,398 had been determined to be better served by the traditional Medicaid program because of exceptional health care needs. A breakdown by county is below.

The top 10 counties with the highest enrollment are: **Pulaski County** with 8,746; **Washington County** with 3,336; **Benton County** with 3,301; **Garland County** with 3,161; **Jefferson County** with 2,731; **Faulkner County** with 2,572; **Sebastian County** with 2,548; **Craighead County** with 2,528; **Crittenden County** with 2,144; and **Saline County** with 1,761.

The program allows the state of Arkansas to use federal Medicaid funding to pay the private health insurance premiums for eligible individuals who make no more than 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Those annual income limits, by household size, are:

Household of 1 -- \$15,856

Household of 2 -- \$21,404

Household of 3 -- \$26,951

Household of 4 -- \$32,499

Household of 5 -- \$38,047

Arkansans who, based on their income, believe they are eligible for the program can apply at www.access.arkansas.gov. People also may apply at their local DHS county office.

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