

Arkansas Insurance Department

Mike Beebe
Governor



Jay Bradford
Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Summit to Explore Health Exchange Development

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS (October 6, 2011) — Joel Ario, former Director of the Office of Health Insurance Exchanges, and Dr. Joseph W. Thompson, the Arkansas Surgeon General, will join Jay Bradford, Arkansas Insurance Commissioner, at the Arkansas Health Benefits Exchange Stakeholder Summit on Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at the Embassy Suites in Little Rock to discuss where a Health Exchange fits in Arkansas's health care improvement efforts.

"I am extremely excited about this opportunity to share with Arkansans the facts about what an Exchange is and what a locally operated one can do to protect and serve the citizens of our state," said Bradford. "I hope our citizens will take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to the Exchange planning process and the ongoing effort to keep the Exchange under state rather than federal control," Bradford said.

Ario, a former insurance commissioner in Pennsylvania and Oregon, will provide a federal perspective on exchange development while Dr. Thompson will discuss a state perspective. Afternoon sessions at the summit will include panelists from the health care industry, insurance agents/brokers, employers, and consumer advocates who will discuss what type of Exchange best fits the needs of Arkansans. Through open forum discussions, participants will have the opportunity to share their viewpoints on the Exchange business model, legal issues, governance, and consumer needs.

(More)

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It is expected that 211,000 Arkansans will enroll in private health insurance plans and 175,000 Arkansans newly eligible for Medicaid will enroll through the Exchange in 2014. Estimates are this will halve the number of uninsured in Arkansas in 2013 from 20% to 10% in 2014.

Registration is available online at <http://hbe.arkansas.gov/>. There is a \$25 registration fee which includes lunch.

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