



ARKANSAS MEDICAL SOCIETY

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August 19, 2026

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

The Honorable Mehmet Oz, MD, Administrator

200 Independence Avenue, S.W.

Washington, DC 20201

RE: Support for Arkansas's Request for a Two-Year Extension of the ARHOME Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver

Dear Administrator Oz:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing physicians, hospitals, pharmacists, nurses, community health centers, and other healthcare professionals and organizations across Arkansas, we write in strong support of the Arkansas Department of Human Services' (DHS) August 5, 2026 request for a two-year extension of the Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME) Section 1115 demonstration waiver.

As outlined in Arkansas's request, ARHOME currently serves more than 200,000 Arkansans. DHS has also explained that changes in federal law and applicable budget-neutrality requirements mean the program cannot continue in its current form and that Arkansas will need to develop a new Medicaid delivery system. We support Arkansas's leaders as they work with CMS and other stakeholders to manage that transition responsibly.

DHS has requested a two-year extension to provide sufficient time to wind down the current program while designing and implementing its successor. We believe that is a reasonable and prudent request. A transition involving more than 200,000 beneficiaries and the organizations that provide their care will require careful planning, clear communication, and coordination among the state, CMS, health plans, providers, and other stakeholders.

Arkansas's request also notes that beneficiaries will continue to receive coverage during the transition regardless of the extension decision. The issue before CMS, therefore, is not whether Arkansas will continue meeting its obligations to eligible beneficiaries, but whether the state will have sufficient time to move from the current program to a successor system in an orderly manner.

Timing is particularly important. As DHS noted in its request, Arkansas is preparing for full implementation of the community engagement and work requirement for the ARHOME population on January 1, 2027.

DHS has expressed concern that beginning a new Medicaid delivery program at the same time could divert attention and resources from those implementation efforts. We believe the requested extension gives Arkansas a reasonable period to sequence these significant changes.

The two-year extension would also provide Arkansas's leaders the opportunity to continue working with CMS, the General Assembly, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders as the successor program is developed. Arkansas's healthcare community stands ready to participate constructively in that process.

We recognize that the federal Medicaid landscape has changed and that Arkansas must respond to those changes. Granting this extension would not alter that reality. It would provide the State the time requested to make the transition thoughtfully and responsibly.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge CMS to approve the Arkansas Department of Human Services' request for a two-year extension of the ARHOME Section 1115 demonstration waiver.

We appreciate the work of Arkansas's leaders and CMS as they navigate this transition and stand ready to assist in developing a path forward that continues to serve Arkansas patients and communities.

Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations

<u>Arkansas Medical Society</u>	<u>Arkansas Hospital Association</u>
<u>University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences</u>	<u>East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging, Inc</u>
<u>Arkansas Association of Area Agencies on Aging</u>	<u>CareLink</u>
<u>HomeCare Association of Arkansas</u>	<u>Arkansas Academy of Family Physicians</u>
<u>Area Agency on Aging of Western Arkansas</u>	<u>Arkansas Healthcare Association</u>
<u>Arkansas Chapter of the American College of Surgeons</u>	<u>Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Arkansas</u>
<u>Community Clinic</u>	<u>St. Vincent Health System</u>
<u>Arkansas Pharmacist Association</u>	<u>Baptist Health</u>
<u>Arkansas Ophthalmological Society</u>	<u>Washington Regional Health System</u>
<u>Arcare</u>	<u>Pulaski County Medical Society</u>
<u>Arkansas Children's Hospital</u>	<u>Arkansas Optometric Association</u>
<u>Arkansas Psychiatric Society</u>	<u>HomeCare Association of Arkansas</u>
<u>CareLink</u>	<u>First Choice Family Care – Camden</u>
<u>Unity Health System</u>	<u>Ashley County Medical Center</u>

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<u>Noydeen Medical Group</u>	<u>Mercy Health System</u>
<u>Arkansas Nurses Association</u>	<u>Arkansas Dermatological Society</u>
<u>Arkansas Chapter of American College of Cardiology</u>	<u>Highlands Oncology</u>
<u>Freeman Health System</u>	<u>American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network</u>
<u>Arkansans Improving Maternal Health</u>	<u>Little Rock Black Nurses Association of Arkansas</u>
<u>Washington County Medical Society</u>	<u>Arkansas Society of Anesthesiologists</u>
<u>St. Bernards Health Care</u>	<u>Emergency Nurses Association</u>
<u>Arkansas Nurse Practitioner Association</u>	<u>American Heart Association</u>
<u>Arkansas Urologic Society</u>	<u>White River Area Agency on Aging</u>
<u>DeWitt Hospital</u>	<u>Jefferson Regional</u>
<u>Access Medical Clinic</u>	<u>Arkansas Ambulance Association</u>
<u>Conway Regional Health System</u>	<u>Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics</u>
<u>Arkansas Chapter of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology</u>	<u>Pain Treatment Centers of America</u>
<u>Blood Cancer United</u>	<u>Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association Board of Trustees</u>
<u>Arkansas Rural Health Partnership</u>	

cc:

The Honorable Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor of Arkansas
Janet Mann, Secretary, Arkansas Department of Human Services
The Honorable John Boozman, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Tom Cotton, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Rick Crawford, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable French Hill, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Steve Womack, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, U.S. House of Representatives
Leadership of the Arkansas General Assembly