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UAMS Applauds SUSTAIN 340B Act

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) applauds Arkansas' Sen. John Boozman and the Senate 340B Bipartisan Working Group for their newly announced SUSTAIN 340B Act preserving and reforming this vital program.

Introduced by Boozman and Sens. Jerry Moran of Kansas, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Tim Kaine of Virginia, and John Hickenlooper of Colorado, the new legislation makes comprehensive reforms to the program while preserving its critical benefits, which support eligible healthcare providers like UAMS and our patients.

“Sen. John Boozman has long been a champion for Arkansas patients and the hospitals that serve them, especially in our rural communities,” said UAMS Chancellor C. Lowry Barnes, M.D. “His leadership and steadfast support for meaningful 340B reform will help preserve a program that enables providers like UAMS to expand access to care, invest in critical services, and meet the needs of our most vulnerable patients.

“UAMS is grateful for Senator Boozman’s commitment to protecting the 340B program and ensuring it remains a strong resource for improving the health of Arkansans.”

The 340B program was enacted by Congress in 1992 to provide safety-net providers relief from high drug costs by giving these providers access to front-end discounts on certain outpatient drugs. Drug manufacturers offer the discounts in exchange for having their drugs covered by Medicaid and Medicare Part B. According to congressional report language, the purpose of the 340B program is to enable covered entities “to stretch scarce federal resources as far as possible, reaching more eligible patients and providing more comprehensive services.”

UAMS uses the program to benefit Arkansans in a variety of ways:

- For patients undergoing infusion medication therapy, in the last 12 months, UAMS secured an estimated \$6.3 million in free drugs for uninsured/underinsured patients and copay assistance of \$1.8 million through UAMS’s medication assistance program.

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- For patients filling specialty medications at UAMS, in the last 12 months, the 340B savings offset more than \$750,000 in out-of-pocket patient copay expense through UAMS's in-house funding program.
- A \$6 copay medication program for uninsured and low-income patients.
- Indirect support of patient care services with direct community benefit such as the 12th Street Health & Wellness Center, the state's only adult Level 1 trauma center, behavioral health services and substance abuse disorders treatment, and specialty services only available in the state at UAMS.
- Charity care of \$18.8 million in Fiscal Year 2025.

"I am very thankful to Senator Boozman and the bipartisan coalition for putting forward meaningful legislation to address challenges and improve the 340B Program," said Brian Jolly, Pharm.D., chief pharmacy officer. "UAMS has been a participant in this program since its inception in 1992. As an academic medical center and safety-net hospital, the savings offered through the 340B program have been critical in meeting both our organizational mission and the original intent of the program in reaching more patients and offering more comprehensive services.

"This proposed legislation is a significant step in supporting covered entities so that patient care and access are preserved, while also providing a sound framework around program integrity."

The SUSTAIN 340B legislation would reiterate the original intent of the program and clarify that it provides point-of-purchase discounts instead of rebates. The act would establish the definition of an eligible patient under the program and covered services for these patients. Additionally, the legislation would place new annual reporting requirements on healthcare providers relating to their utilization of the program.

"We are thankful to Sen. John Boozman for his leadership and unwavering support on this issue," said Andy Davis, vice chancellor of Institutional Relations. "The 340B program is invaluable to hospitals like UAMS that provide care to all Arkansans, regardless of their ability to pay."

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,553 students and 1,030 medical residents and fellows, and two dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with about 12,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health.

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