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For Immediate Release

Natural Wonders Survey – FAST FACTS

What is the Natural Wonders Initiative?

The Natural Wonders Initiative is administered through the Natural Wonders Partnership (NWP) Council, comprised of organizations that serve children, and originally convened by Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) to identify the health needs of the state's children. The Council's primary purpose is to construct a strategic plan for improving the health and quality of life of Arkansas children. The plan is expected to be announced in early summer 2008. The First Lady of Arkansas, Ginger Beebe, serves as honorary chair of the Council and Jonathan Bates, M.D., president and CEO of Arkansas Children's Hospital, is chair.

What is the survey?

A statewide telephone survey was developed by Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families to explore the perceived health status of children in the state. The survey was performed over a one month period in October 2007. Over 2,000 Arkansans were surveyed across all areas of the state with no one area being disproportionately represented.

What did the survey find?

The survey covered several issues in an attempt to determine people's attitudes and concerns about children's health. Of the survey results, the following findings were most significant (though for a more complete listing of questions and responses, please see the executive summary):

- When asked about the biggest problems Arkansas faces in regards to children's health and well-being, an overwhelming majority cited the lack of, cost of, or quality of health insurance.
- When asked to rate their community on a variety of issues, respondents gave the lowest marks to their community's ability to serve children with learning disabilities and discipline problems. The highest marks were given for education and quality pre-k for three- and four-year-olds.
- When asked to rank their community on providing a safe environment, respondents in the southeast region of the state gave much lower marks than other areas. For the same question, African Americans gave much lower marks than white respondents.
- When asked to rate the seriousness of specific problems in their community, overweight children was cited as a serious to moderate problem by 77 percent of respondents. Substance abuse in children was also cited as a serious problem by a large number of respondents, as was teen pregnancy.

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- Respondents were asked to give their opinion on several read statements. When asked about Arkansas's child welfare system, respondents showed a serious lack of knowledge. However, when read statements about family access to healthcare, a large percentage agreed that low-income families have less access to healthcare. And while overall, only 37% of respondents agreed that minority children have less access to healthcare, 72% of African American respondents agreed with that same statement.
- Respondents also showed an interest in finding alternative to the problem of health care access. Ideas such as well-child visits and health screens in schools received high marks, as did stricter laws regarding teenage driving.

What will be done with the survey results?

The Natural Wonders Partnership Council will continue to explore the results of the survey; however, a more direct approach will be the next phase of our work. Over the next two months, members of the Natural Wonders Partnership Council will employ the Study Circles model (a platform for community discussion) to engage citizens within their communities to discuss their priorities for improving children's health and to help determine what steps should be taken across the state. These discussions will provide additional input in the way in which problems may be experienced in different areas of the state and which solutions may be of the greatest assistance.

Where can I find the complete survey results as well as other information about the Natural Wonders Initiative?

Survey results can be found by visiting the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families' Web site at www.aradvocates.org or by calling 501-371-9678.

Who should be contacted regarding the survey or Natural Wonders?

The Natural Wonders Initiative is a collaborative effort; inquiries can be made of each partner.

For questions specific to the survey, please contact Rhonda Sanders with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families at 501-371-9678 ext 101 or RSanders@aradvocates.org

For questions regarding Arkansas Children's Hospital's role in the Natural Wonders Initiative, please contact Scott Gordon, executive vice president, Arkansas Children's Hospital, at (501) 364-1413.

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