

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Traci Hampton
Director of Marketing & Communications
479-387-1825 / tracihampton@hogonc.com

Highlands is part of a coalition urging CMS to Approve ARHOME Extension

Springdale, Arkansas– Highlands Oncology joined more than 50 healthcare organizations from across the state in urging Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Mehmet Oz, MD, to approve the Arkansas Department of Human Services' (DHS) request for a two-year extension of the Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME) Section 1115 demonstration waiver.

In a letter sent Wednesday, the coalition of physicians, clinics, hospitals, pharmacists, nurses, community health centers and other healthcare professionals and organizations serving patients across Arkansas asked CMS to grant the state the time requested for the transition.

ARHOME currently serves more than 200,000 Arkansans. As DHS explained in its August 5 request, changes in federal law and applicable budget-neutrality requirements mean the program cannot continue in its current form, and Arkansas will need to develop a new Medicaid delivery system. DHS requested the two-year extension to provide sufficient time to wind down the current program while designing and implementing its successor, a request the coalition calls "reasonable and prudent."

"Any significant change to a healthcare program that serves more than 200,000 Arkansans must be approached thoughtfully and with patients at the center of the process," said **Thaddeus Beck, MD, Interim CEO of Highlands Oncology**. "For patients facing cancer and other serious illnesses, continuity of coverage and access to care are critical. Highlands Oncology supports this request because Arkansas needs adequate time to build a responsible path forward—one that minimizes disruption for patients, providers and communities across our state."

"This is about getting it right," said Naveen Patil, MD, president of the Arkansas Medical Society, which organized the coalition letter. "Designing a new Medicaid delivery system for Arkansas will take close coordination among the state, CMS, the General Assembly and the people who deliver care every day. Arkansas's healthcare community stands ready to do our part, and a two-year extension gives everyone the time to do that work well."