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Press Release

Governor Signs “Emerging Therapies Act of 2017”

Pilot Study will allow Regenerative Injection Therapies to be covered on State Employee and Teacher health plans

Little Rock, ARK, April 10, 2017: The Emerging Therapies Act of 2017 was signed into law by Governor Asa Hutchinson today, granting pilot access to State Employees and Teachers to Regenerative Injection Therapies as a treatment of orthopedic conditions on their health care plans. Arkansas now leads the country as the first state to adopt a policy to include these emerging therapies in state employee health insurance.

“This could potentially save the state \$100 Million using regenerative medicine as an alternative to surgery or pharmaceuticals for orthopedic conditions.” states Morgan Pile, Executive Vice President of Strongside Solutions, who worked with HB2014 sponsors Senator David Sanders, Rep Joe Farrer and Rep Scott Baltz to bring the opportunity to the state. “Regenerative Injection Therapies like Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP), Bone Marrow Aspirate Concentrate (BMAC) and Amniotic tissue have been shown to be effective treatments with up to an 80% savings of surgical costs while virtually absent of complications.” Wendell Strickland, founder and managing partner of Strongside Solutions is pleased to be a part of developing programs that prevent fraud, waste and abuse in medical and prescription drug plans for many years. “We have worked with state, county and city governments as well as private employers’ self-funded medical plans to reduce cost and maintain viable healthcare programs. Regenerative Medicine in another program we use to help our clients reduce healthcare costs and reach their goals. Employers with self-funded medical and prescription programs turn to Strongside Solutions to deliver these and other programs across the United States.” Strickland said.

Representative Scott Baltz has personal experience with these therapies, as his wife was advised that a surgical intervention might not provide more than 2 years’ relief of her symptoms, and could ultimately leave her with worse symptoms than she was experiencing. They elected to use Regenerative Injection Therapy (RIT) instead of a surgical procedure, and 4 years later she is still experiencing relief that allows her to raise her grandchildren and live a normal life. Representative Baltz realized that RIT was “something that could help other Arkansans if insurance would cover it.” His wife testified to the Employee Benefits Division (EBD) about the merits of this emerging therapy in 2014. In the amended bill, the Employee Benefits Division will conduct a pilot study for state employees and teachers’ health plans. The EBD will

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set up the parameters of the study including assuring that only certified providers, settings and applications will be available for reimbursement under the health plan. At the end of 2018, the full study results will be reviewed with a goal of providing all insured Arkansans access to these therapies.

“Arkansas has always been a leader in medical innovation. This is a major step forward for healthcare in our state.” Dr. Christopher Dougherty, orthopedic surgeon at Agility Center Orthopedics in Bentonville said. “The opportunity to offer a non-surgical solutions for an injury that formerly may have required surgery is both a time and money saver for the patient and society as a whole.”

The American Association of Orthopaedic Medicine (AAOM), the world’s oldest educational organization dedicated to teaching Interventional Regenerative Orthopedic Medicine (IROM) was also a proponent of this bill passing. The “Emerging Therapy Act of 2017” in Arkansas, is revolutionary in both vision and scope. Its implementation will forge a new path in healthcare delivery, and we are inspired by as well as committed to its success going forward.” Dr. Thomas Bond, President-Elect of AAOM issued in a statement.

Dr. David L. Harshfield, Jr. is a pioneer in regenerative cellular therapy. “Regenerative Medicine moves away from the allopathic medicine (M.D.) model, where a physician matches a diagnosis to only a binary, pharmaceutical or surgical solution, and focuses instead on the “correction of medicine”. The State of Arkansas will now give patients a choice beyond drugs or surgery. “We are not man-made, and no ‘man’ can heal us. Physicians must admit to patients that we only ‘men’ and as such, we can only help patients heal themselves. With Regenerative Medicine, physicians can help patients restore their health by utilizing the natural healing responses found within the body”, said Harshfield. Dr. Harshfield, an Interventional Radiologist with specialization in musculoskeletal radiology and cellular medicine, has been exploring autologous (patient’s own) adult stem cells since graduating from UAMS with Honors in 1981 and has become a leader in cellular restoration. Dr. Harshfield brings his expertise in cellular therapy to treat a variety of conditions without expensive, often dangerous surgery and pharmaceuticals to improve outcomes while reducing recovery and rehabilitation time. And unlike pharmaceutical and surgical options, there has **never** been a serious adverse event (SAE) associated with regenerative therapies when administered by credentialed physicians utilizing certified protocols.

About Strongside Solutions: Strongside Solutions works with employers and municipalities to manage their fiduciary liabilities stopping fraud, waste and abuse in their healthcare plans. As healthcare risk managers, they establish high value networks, provide medical tourism solutions and other fiduciary services for clients around the world. www.strongsidesolutions.com For more information, contact Morgan Pile, Executive Vice President of Strongside Solutions at 501-213-5980 or morgan@strongsidesolutions.com