

Joe W. Thompson, MD, MPH

Director, Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI)

Surgeon General for the State of Arkansas

Associate Professor in the Colleges of Medicine and Public Health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Practicing General Pediatrician at Arkansas Children's Hospital



Drawing on years of expertise in using scientific evidence to inform health policy, Dr. Joe Thompson directs and oversees all of the center's activities. He provides leadership in devising the center's policy, engagement and other strategies and serves as the center's key spokesperson.

In addition to his leadership role for the center, Dr. Thompson is responsible for developing health policy, research activities and collaborative programs that promote better health and health care in Arkansas. This has included vanguard efforts in planning and implementing health care financing reform, and tobacco- and obesity-related health-promotion and disease-prevention programs. He was the lead architect of the Tobacco Settlement Act of 2000, has been at the forefront of Arkansas's efforts to prevent childhood obesity and instituted the Arkansas Health Insurance Roundtable. Under Dr. Thompson's watch, ACHI helped pass the Clean Indoor Air Act of 2006, documented the state's success in halting progress of the childhood obesity epidemic and helped implement ARHealthNetworks, Arkansas's health care benefits waiver for low-income workers.

Dr. Thompson serves on the Arkansas Board of Health and is past president of the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Nationally, Dr. Thompson serves on the board of Academy Health and on the Health Care Financing and Organization National Advisory Panel. He has authored many articles and publications.

Dr. Thompson earned his medical degree from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and Master of Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Luther Terry Fellow in Preventive Medicine advising the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health in Washington, D.C., and the assistant vice president and director of research at the National Committee for Quality Assurance in Washington, D.C.