



**Louisiana
Rural Health
Association**

Board of Directors

-Chris Kohlenberg-
President
337-893-6232

-Sam Fulton-
President-Elect
337-239-5113

- Vernon Stevens -
Treasurer
318-686-2441

-Jim Dixon -
Secretary
504-458-4936

- Wayne Arboneaux-
Immediate Past President
985-369-3600

Ron Barrow
Milton Bourgeois
Byron Briggs
Mark H. Chustz
Brad Fife
Arthur Fort III, MD
Nick Gachassin Jr.
Brian Jakes
T. Bradley Keith
Paul Landry
Suzanne Lavergne
Garrett Lejeune
Richard MacMillan
John Matessino
Susan Moreland
Kristy Nichols
Evalyn Ormond
L.J. Pecot
Billy Rucker
Scott Stafford
Christopher Vidrine
Christopher Williams

Executive Director
Donna Newchurch
985-369-3813

LRHA Update

Partial funding for this publication is provided through a federal grant from the Office of Rural Health Policy (HRSA) and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health

Volume XIII, Issue II

February—March 2006

LRHA Mission Statement:

To serve as a unified voice for the promotion of rural health care through advocacy, education, and leadership.

Rural Health 2006

Strategic Transformation: The Time is Now!

LRHA Spring Education Event

March 21—22, 2006 ~ Shreveport, LA

It is a pleasure to extend an invitation to all rural healthcare leaders to register for the 2006 Spring Education Event. Louisiana Rural Health Association, with support from the Department of Health & Hospitals, Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health have collaborated on this year's event, and you will have an opportunity to gain an understanding of the outlook on rural health as the transformation of our state unfolds.

With the input of many of our constituents, an outstanding agenda has been developed. We encourage you to register today. Registration forms are available at www.lrha.org, or by calling the LRHA office at (985) 369-3813.

MONDAY, MARCH 20

Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health
CAH Advisory Committee Meeting

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

8:00 – 9:15 a.m.

Quality Advisory Committee Breakfast

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Conference Registration

9:30 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Remarks
Chris Kohlenberg, LRHA President; and
Donna Newchurch, LRHA Executive Director

9:45 a.m.

Louisiana DHH Update and Overview
Dr. Frederick Cerise, Secretary, DHH

10:30 a.m.

Louisiana Recovery Authority:
Recovery & Rebuilding
Andy Kopplin, Executive Director,
Louisiana Recovery Authority, *invited*

11:30 a.m.

2006 Legislative Overview
Jennifer Pike, Research Director,
Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

12:30 p.m., *Networking Lunch, Market Place Buffet*

1:30 p.m.

Behavioral Health in Louisiana: Just the Facts
Raymond Jetson, Deputy Secretary, DHH

2:15 p.m.

Telepsychiatry in a Primary Care Setting
Michael Andry, CEO, EXCELth;
Dr. Thomas Kim, Morehouse School of Medicine

3:00 p.m., *Refreshment Break*

Sponsored by Correct Care, Inc.

3:30 p.m.

Engineering the System:
An Exercise in Emergency Preparedness
Dr. Roseanne Prats, Director of Emergency
Preparedness, DHH

Dinner on your own

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

8:00 – 9:00 a.m., *Breakfast Buffet*

9:00 am

DHH E-Health Record Exchange Initiative
Roxane Townsend, MD, Medicaid Medical
Director, DHH

9:45 a.m.

eHealth Initiative's
Connecting Communities Toolkit
Janet Marchibroda, CEO, eHealth Initiative, *invited*

10:30 a.m.

Opportunities for Rural Facilities: OASIS
Michael Calabro, Project Coordinator,
Louisiana Rural Health Association

11:15 a.m.

Conference Adjourns

A View from the Field . .

Dear Members, Colleagues, and Healthcare Leaders,

Although February is the shortest month of the year, LRHA staff has successfully included what would seem to be two months of work in these twenty eight days. This work ethic seems to be the norm these days. Every professional in the organizations and agencies I have spoken with since the storms shares this same story; there is simply so much to do.

In our office, LRHA staff has been working diligently to be responsive to member requests for trainings, partnering with CMS staff to deliver on-site enrollment opportunities to rural residents, and keeping up with notices and action items specific to the Medicare Prescription Drug Enrollment opportunity. We have also been working to identify opportunities to leverage resources – that includes executing a formal memorandum of understanding with the Louisiana Primary Care Association and partnering with DHH on educational opportunities. Additionally, we are continuing to add resources to LRHA through increased programming opportunities for the members such as the OASIS initiative.

All the programs and events listed in this column are further detailed within this issue of the LRHA Update. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the opportunities LRHA has for you and your organization and to participate in those that meet your needs.

As always, if you have comments or suggestions specific to LRHA programming or offerings, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your input,



Donna Newchurch
Executive Director

Donna Newchurch

Executive Director

**Ready to go
Smoke-Free?**

Louisiana Rural Health Association is ready to help...

Contact: Michael Calabro
OASIS Project Coordinator
(985) 369-2223 or calabro@lrha.org



**From the
Diamond Corner...**



Drug Free Work Place – Simple Solutions to a Costly Problem

Maintaining a drug free workplace is one of the best methods of ensuring a high level of patient care, keeping workers' compensation cost low and ensuring the employees that the hospital is focused on hiring and maintaining the most qualified staff that are available.

When people think of safety in a healthcare setting, attention is often focused on areas such as proper body mechanics, use of patient lifts, reduction of slip and fall hazards or engineering controls related to blood borne pathogens. While these areas are extremely important when it comes to workplace injuries, the topic of drug abuse and drug testing does not seem to receive as much attention when it comes to accident prevention.

Substance abuse drains more than \$100 Billion from American businesses every year according to "Working partners," a National Conference Proceedings Report: sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, the SBA, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The report notes;

- **WORKERS' COMPENSATION:** 38% to 50% of all Workers' Compensation claims are related to substance abuse in the workplace; substance abusers file three to five times as many Workers' Compensation claims.
- **MEDICAL COSTS:** Substance abusers incur 300% higher medical costs than non-abusers.
- **ABSENTEEISM:** Substance abusers are 2.5 times more likely to be absent eight or more days a year.
- **LOST PRODUCTIVITY:** Substance abusers are 1/3 less productive.
- **EMPLOYEE TURNOVER:** It costs a business an average of \$7,000 to replace a salaried worker.

Drug Free Workplace, continued on next page

While these statistics may seem somewhat impersonal, I am sure that many hospital staff members can think back on a particular instance where drug use affected an employee's performance, patient care, or had a negative financial impact on the hospital. The benefits far outweigh the costs associated with development of an effective drug free workplace program.

♦ **ALCOHOL**

Testing for alcohol is something that should be included in the drug testing program due to the fact that alcohol is readily accessible to almost any employee. Drinking may take place prior to a shift, during lunch and on occasion while at work. Alcohol abuse is extremely costly both to the employer as well as the employee based on the following information...

- ♦ **LOST WORK DAYS:** Alcoholism is estimated to cause 500 million lost workdays annually.
- ♦ **YOUNG ADULTS:** Heavy drinking occurs most frequently among young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 (13.3 percent), peaking at age 21 (17.4 percent).
- ♦ **DRINKING & DRUG USE:** Heavy drinking correlates strongly with illicit drug use. Of 12.4 million heavy drinkers, 30.5 percent are also current illicit drug users
- ♦ **ALCOHOL AS A DRUG:** Alcohol is the most widely abused drug among working adults. An estimated 6.2 percent of adults working full time are heavy drinkers.
- ♦ **BINGE DRINKING:** More than one in three (38 percent) workers between the ages of 18 and 25 are binge drinkers

CONCLUSION

While maintaining a drug free workplace will not guarantee an accident free environment, it is one of several important steps that each facility should take to ensure that all employees are afforded the opportunity to work in an environment that is safe, productive and most of all offers the highest quality of patient care available. For additional information on this topic, please contact McNeary, Inc. at mhs@mcneary.com.

ATLS Courses Offered



The Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals has contracted with Tulane Medical School, and is dedicated to working with the Louisiana Rural Health Association to provide Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) certification course for physicians. ATLS is a 2-day lecture/skills/live lab course held at Tulane School of Medicine on a Saturday and Sunday every month.

The purpose of these courses is to further the readiness of the community and the state for trauma and mass casualty situations. This includes both natural and man made disasters, like Hurricane Katrina and September 11th type disasters. Preparing for these types of disasters requires the state to establish protocols for stabilization and transfer of patients. This would greatly assist the state in improving the standard of care for patients particularly in those areas of the state that do not have direct access to a trauma Level 1 facility. The funds for this training are made possible by the Health Resources and Services Administration Grant Program to help prepare providers for mass casualty disasters.

These courses are "voucher program for free training sessions". The vouchered individual must register and pay for an ATLS course with Tulane University School of Medicine, Life Support Training Center. The Training Center shall verify attendance and sign vouchers for participants completing the ATLS course. The Training Center will then submit the completed voucher to DHH for reimbursement or return of payment to participants for whom DHH provides vouchers. Please note that the referenced Training Center is Tulane University School of Medicine Life Support Training Center until LSU-Shreveport goes on-line with providing ATLS courses.

ATLS Course Dates

Our Lady of the Lake College

5220 Essen Lane

Baton Rouge, LA

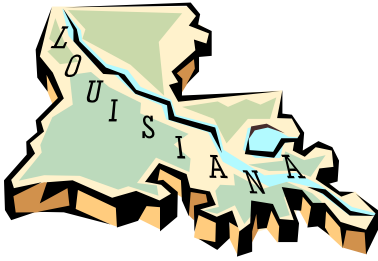
- March 3 & 4, 2006 – 2006 Provider
- March 4, 2006 – 2006 Refresher

The National EMS Academy

151 Southpark

Lafayette, LA

- April 8 & 9, 2006 – 2006 Provider
- April 9, 2006 – 2006 Refresher



CMS, LRHA & SHIIP Hit the Road!

On February 20, 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, with assistance from the Louisiana Rural Health Association, the Louisiana Department of Insurance Senior Health Insurance Information Program, and other statewide partners will kick off its two-week tour through the state of Louisiana promoting enrollment into Medicare's prescription Drug Plan, better known as Medicare Part D.

CMS has provided a bus, stocked with computers with internet access, ready to enroll Medicare beneficiaries. The bus will debut in Louisiana in Ferriday at Louisiana Technical College; secured with much assistance from Vernon Stevens and Billy Rucker of Riverland Medical Center. LRHA has also pledged assistance at Prevoist Memorial Hospital—thanks to Mr. Vincent Cataldo and Mrs. Jane Arboneaux; Byrd Regional Hospital—thanks to Mr. Sam Fulton; and DeSoto Regional Health System—thanks to Mr. Scott Stafford.

The following is the bus' itinerary for its entire stay here in the state:

- Monday, February 20; Ferriday, LA
- Tuesday, February 21; Pineville, LA
- Wednesday, February 22; FEMA Renaissance Village, Baker, LA
- Thursday, February 23; Houma
- Friday, February 24; Donaldsonville, LA
- Monday, February 27; Slidell, LA
- Tuesday, February 28; Lafayette, LA
- Wednesday, March 1; Lafayette, LA
- Thursday, March 2; Leesville, LA
- Friday, March 3; Mansfield, LA

For detailed information on the spots the bus will be stopping at, please call the LRHA office at 985-369-3813, or email Erin Watson at watson@lrha.org.

Rural Health Clinic Education Conference: Resources, Regulations, and Reimbursement



The Louisiana Rural Health Association, in conjunction with the LA DHH Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, held the 2006 Rural Health Clinic Education Conference

and Practice Management Workshop on January 25-26, 2006 at the Paragon Conference Center in Marksville, LA. The two educational and informative days offered intensive learning opportunities specific to rural health clinics. Over 80 people, including participants and speakers attended the conference. After tallying the evaluation forms, it appears that an overwhelming majority of the participants rated the conference and workshop as excellent.

The conference was kicked off with a Practice Management Workshop presented by the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, titled: Protecting Your Bottom Line. The workshop was offered to all conference participants at no cost. The workshop provided information to rural health clinic professionals regarding potential problems they might face and successful resolutions to use in these situations.

The Rural Health Clinic Education Conference: Resources, Regulations and Reimbursement, offered up-to-date information about legislative activities and changes to RHC rules. Additionally, the conference provided ample opportunities for networking as well as a chance for participants to initiate a dialogue with DHH officials who are directly responsible for the RHC application process and to receive current information relative to federal legislation. With such an excellent participation level and positive feedback, the conference provided a wealth of education.

LRHA would like to thank all participants and speakers for contributing to another successful conference. Please note that all speaker presentations are available for viewing at www.lrha.org. If you were unable to attend and would like to receive information distributed at the meeting, please contact Stacy Fontenot at (985) 369-3813.

Medicare^{Rx}
Prescription Drug Coverage ^X



Have you
checked out



the LRHA Policy Corner?

go to: **www.lrha.org**

Groups Call for National Investment in IT Training

On February 9, the American Health Information Management Association and American Medical Informatics Association called for immediate national action to address workforce challenges related to electronic health records and a nationwide health information infrastructure. The report outlines nine recommendations for preparing the health care workforce to use technology tools and ensuring a sufficient number of well-qualified health information specialists to achieve effective health IT transformation. It also includes specific recommendations for government, employers and employees, vendors and academic institutions. To view this report, go to:
http://www.ahima.org/emerging_issues/Workforce_web.pdf

New Resources on Medicare Drug Benefit Are Online

As of January 13, 2006, enrollment figures released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) indicated that 14.3 million Medicare beneficiaries of the 43 million who are eligible have enrolled in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. 6.2 million of these were automatically enrolled because they are considered "dual eligibles", they previously had prescription drug coverage through Medicaid. For state-by-state statistics, go to www.statehealthfacts.org. This website provided by The Kaiser Family Foundation offers a wealth of information specific, but not limited to Medicare Part D.

*Louisiana Primary Care Association
& Morehouse Medical School,
in coordination with
Louisiana Rural Health Association
present...*

*Giving Back
...the Gift of Hope*

**Train the Trainer Workshop for
Providers & Community Advocates
Helping Disaster Survivors with
Post Traumatic Stress Disorders**

March 8, 2006

**Embassy Suites Hotel
4914 Constitution Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808**

Presenting Guest Speaker

**Kevin Becker, Psy. D.
Director of Institute for Trauma & Crisis
Harvard Medical School**

Registration Forms Available @:
**www.lrha.org
-Conferences and Events-**



Rural Enrollment Initiative – Taking it to Higher Levels

Enrollment in the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan began November 15, 2005; however, LRHA's initiative began long before that. After much success assisting Medicare beneficiaries in applying for a drug discount card in 2004, LRHA continued its successful course into the implementation of Medicare Part D. Since August 2005, LRHA has hosted and/or presented at 28 workshops offered to the public at no cost. These workshops were highly attended and offered seniors the opportunity to gain information and ask questions about the plan and the changes that were coming in 2006. After the initial enrollment period began, these workshops turned into actual "enrollment events". Through the partnership that the Rural Enrollment Initiative has formed with the Access to Benefits Coalition and the LA Department of Insurance Senior Health Insurance Information Program, and an in-house partnership with the Health Access Planning Network, LRHA has been able to encounter and counsel almost 900 Medicare beneficiaries, while successfully enrolling approximately 300.

These events have been held at member hospitals, community council on aging agencies, community senior centers, clinics, and libraries. LRHA will continue this initiative and would love to visit your facility so that the people of your community can benefit, as well.

Upcoming events include, but are not limited to the state-wide bus tour with CMS, Jackson Parish Hospital (March 8), and events local to LRHA's office. If you are interested in hosting an event at your facility—we'd love to hear from you. Contact Erin at LRHA, (985) 369-3813 or watson@lrha.org.

WANTED!!!

Member input for the
LRHA Update?

(985) 369-3813

Donna: newchurch@lrha.org

Erin: watson@lrha.org

2006

Southern Regional Rural Health Conference *Update*



Sponsored by:
the Alabama, Louisiana, and
Mississippi Rural Health
Associations

June 4, 2006

RURAL HEALTH GOLF SCRAMBLE

Sponsored by: McNeary, Inc.

Dancing Rabbit Golf Course
Pearl River Resort

June 5-6, 2006

RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Pearl River Resort, Silver Star Hotel

FOR EXHIBITOR INFORMATION,
go to:

<http://www.lrha.org/2006%20Exhibitor%20Brochure.pdf>

FOR RESORT INFORMATION,
go to:

www.pearlriverresort.com

FOR RESERVATIONS,
Call 1-866-447-3275

HRSA Advisory Committee Meets

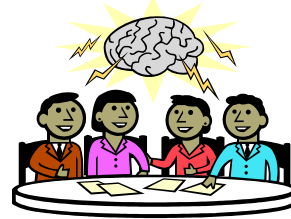
On February 7, 2006, a quorum of members of the HRSA Advisory Committee met in the Board Room of the Louisiana Hospital Association, Baton Rouge, LA. LRHA Executive Director Donna Newchurch and LRHA Project Coordinator Michael Calabro were in attendance.

Jimmy Guidry, MD, called the meeting to order; Rosanne Prats, MHA, ScD, facilitated the meeting and discussion on the grant financials and outstanding contracts. By a vote of the committee, it was determined that invitations to participate on the Advisory Committee would be extended to representatives from the Office of Mental Health and a Louisiana American Indian Tribal Member. Discussion at the meeting centered on grant deliverables, the allocation process, EM system implementation, and the Pandemic Flu Plan. There was also much discussion on how infrastructure could be built at the regional level. During the course of discussion, Dr. Guidry encouraged committee members to identify strategies that would allow for gathering "assets at the regional level."

Per the comments from rural advocates in the room, specifically those of LPCA Executive Director Rhonda Litt, it was determined that a working committee would be formed to address ways to incorporate FQHCs and RHCs into eligible applicants for grant funds in the next application.

RURAL HEALTH CLINIC CONSTITUENCY GROUP MEETS JANUARY 26, 2006

Highlights from the meeting include:



- ◆ Comments from Group Chair Tracy Morris
- ◆ Identification of educational agenda items
- ◆ Partnership suggestions with other associations
- ◆ Continuing Education Requests
- ◆ Quarterly Conference Call Schedule

*For additional detailed information,
Contact LRHA @ 985-369-3813*

★ ★ Rural Health Policy Institute ★ ★

Invited Speakers

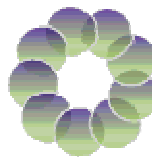
- Mark McClellan, MD, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- David Brailer, MD, PhD, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
- Marcia Brand, Ph.D., Director, Office of Rural Health Policy

**February 27 - March 1, 2006
Washington, DC Grand Hyatt**



www.NRHArural.org/conferences

National Health Plan Collaborative to Reduce Disparities and Improve Quality



The National Health Plan Collaborative, established in December 2004, is a groundbreaking project bringing together nine major health insurance companies, in partnership with organizations from the public and private sectors, to identify ways to improve the quality of health care for racially and ethnically diverse populations. Together, member health plans reach more than 70 million Americans.

Explore the new website of the National Health Plan Collaborative, a public-private partnership bringing together nine major health insurance companies to identify ways to improve the quality of health care for racially and ethnically diverse populations.

Go to: <http://www.chcs.org/nationalHealthPlanCollaborative/index.html>

LRHA Educational Calendar

March 3 & 4, 2006

Advanced Trauma Life Support Certification

Sponsored by: DHH, Tulane Medical School & LRHA
Our Lady of the Lake College
Baton Rouge

March 8, 2006

Giving Back the Gift of Hope

Sponsored by Louisiana Primary Care Association
Co-sponsored by LRHA
Embassy Suites ~ Baton Rouge

March 21—22, 2006

Rural Health 2006

Strategic Transformation: The Time is Now!
LRHA Spring Education Event
Eldorado Resort ~ Shreveport

April 8 & 9, 2006

Advanced Trauma Life Support Certification

Sponsored by: DHH, Tulane Medical School & LRHA
The National EMS Academy
Lafayette

Louisiana Rural
Health Association
Sponsors

Diamond Sponsor

 **MCNEARY**

A
STEP
AHEAD

Platinum Sponsor

HSLI
HSLI Agency

Gold Sponsor

 **LHC**
GROUP

Bronze Sponsor

 **COMPASS**
HEALTHCARE GROUP



Louisiana Rural Health Association
Post Office Box 387
Napoleonville, LA 70390
(985) 369-3813 fax (985) 369-3630

PRESORT
NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NAPOLEONVILLE
LA
PERMIT # 33