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Louisiana Rural Health Association Implements Smoke-Free “OASIS” in Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers

NAPOLEONVILLE, La. (Sep. 1) – With substantial support from smoke-free legislation recently signed by Governor Blanco, SB 742, the Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA) is spreading its secondhand smoke prevention message further with phase two of its Operation Against Smoking/Inhaling Secondhand Smoke (OASIS) Initiative.

For the past year, OASIS Project Coordinator Michael Calabro worked primarily with rural hospitals and initiated smoke-free policies on 31 campuses. Phase two involves the association’s many rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers.

OASIS began in June 2005 with a partnership grant from The Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco Free-Living (TFL) that will last through July 2008. As one of only five statewide grantees, LRHA is seeking to decrease the effects of habitual smoking and second-hand smoke by encouraging rural hospitals, clinics, and federally qualified health centers to establish smoke-free campuses in the 29 parishes known as the “Delta Parishes.”

“Using lessons learned from phase one, OASIS aims to implement smoke-free environments while emphasizing that ‘smoke-free’ does not mean ‘smoker-free’ or ‘anti-smoker,’” Calabro explains. “We are going to work closely with facility staff, administrators and community leaders to increase the probability of success for a smoke-free policy that is conducive to each individual campus.”

If you are an LRHA health care facility interested in promoting the elimination of second-hand smoke in the workplace or a non-member wanting to join, please contact Michael Calabro at (985) 369-2223/calabro@lrha.org.

About LRHA

The Louisiana Rural Health Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health of the citizens of rural Louisiana. The membership provides

leadership in rural health care issues through advocacy, communication and education. Our membership is composed of individuals and organizations interested in making a difference in the quality of the health care delivery system for Louisiana's rural citizens.

About TFL

The Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living provides statewide coordination of existing tobacco control initiatives, funds innovative community programs for tobacco control, and develops statewide media campaigns to help reduce the excessive burden of tobacco use on the state's resources and improve the overall health and quality of life. TFL also funds the Louisiana Tobacco Quitline, 1(800) QUIT-NOW. For more information on creating a smoke-free environment where you live, work and play, visit www.myTFL.org. For help quitting, call 1(800) QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

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