



**Louisiana Rural Health Association**  
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## **LRHA Launches Operation Against Smoking/Inhaling Secondhand Smoke (OASIS) in Rural Communities**

**(Napoleonville, LA, May 24, 2005)** - Once again funding sources have recognized the need to properly fund rural health initiatives by awarding Louisiana Rural Health Association with a partnership grant from the Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco Free-Living (TFL). As one of only four statewide grantees, Louisiana Rural Health Association is seeking to decrease the effects of 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.” The ambitious project is known as OASIS – Operation Against Smoking/Inhaling Second-hand Smoke.

In making the announcement, Dr. Thomas Houston stated, “We are excited about supporting the important work your organization is doing in the State of Louisiana and wish you much success in our efforts working together.” Sighting the self-reported information by rural hospital administrators that the vast majority of rural hospitals do not have smoke-free campuses, Tobacco Free-Living is funding a three-year effort to reverse this situation.

Accepting the award on behalf of the Louisiana Rural Health Association, Donna Newchurch, Executive Director stated that the association would work with rural hospitals the first year, rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers in the second year, and identifying smoking cessation programs in the third. “We want to develop and implement smoke-free campuses by working with the administrators to communicate that smoke-free does not mean smoker-free or anti-smoker,” she elaborated. Continuing with her comments, Newchurch also stated, “We are going to work with facility staff, administrators, and community leaders in order to increase the probability of success for a smoke-free environment.”

In order to ensure community acceptance and program success, OASIS is going to provide the following services: (1) presentations at all LRHA conferences; (2) arrange for ACHE continuing educational units; (3) dedicated space in the Association’s newsletter; and (4) appropriate media and press communications. OASIS will address the need to remove smoking from the campuses of the rural hospitals and assist administrators in

firmly establishing their facilities as the chief smoke-free advocate in their community.

Any health care facility administrator interested in promoting the elimination of second-hand smoke in the workplace is encouraged to contact LRHA at (985) 369-3813.

*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.*

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