

LRHA UPDATE

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LRHA MISSION STATEMENT:

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



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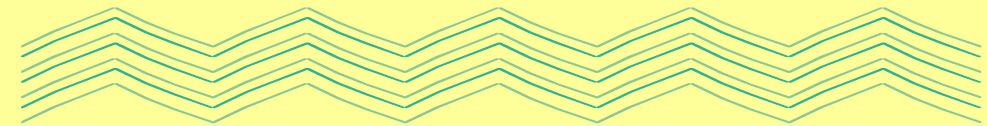
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A look back at the
2008 Annual Fall Conference
Lafayette, La

December 15-16, 2008



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A view from the field...

*Dear Members, Colleagues, and
Healthcare Leaders,*



I hope that this letter finds you doing well. We ended 2008 with an excellent education event and we started off the 2009 on the same track. Several LRHA members traveled to Washington D.C. to attend the National Rural Health Association's Policy Institute held on January 26-28, 2009. We had an opportunity to meet with our Louisiana Delegation to continue our advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill to improve access to quality care in rural Louisiana. Stay tuned for the March 2009 issue of the LRHA Update for detailed information regarding our Capitol Hill Visits.

On January 16, 2009 the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, with support from LRHA, held the *Bringing Mental Health and Dental Health to Your RHC and FQHC Workshop* and the *PM Boot Camp* on February 12-13, 2009. I would like to thank the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health for their outstanding efforts to provide educational opportunities for all rural providers. Both the *Bringing Mental Health and Dental Health to Your RHC and FQHC Workshop* and the *PM Boot Camp* were well attended and received excellent reviews.

Don't miss out on the 2009 RHC Education Event and the 2009 Spring Conference! The RHC Education Event will be held on April 6th and the Spring Education Event will be held on April 7th. Both educational events will be held at the Baton Rouge Marriott. Mark your calendars today to save the date. I'm finalizing the agenda and conference materials and they will be sent out soon!! Call the Baton Rouge Marriott today at (800) 228-9290 now to get the group rate of \$119.00.

In closing, I would like to thank all members for renewing your 2009 LRHA membership. It's not too late send in your renewal membership if you haven't done so already! We truly value your membership, commitment and dedication to serving your rural community.

I hope you have a safe, fun and happy Mardi Gras!

Stacy Fontenot

Executive Director

From the Diamond Corner...

Thank You!



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Louisiana Launches Free Virtual Toolkit for Providers

Web site Encourages Electronic Health Information Exchange

E-prescribing by Louisiana physicians grew by almost 1,000 percent in 2007, when 458 physicians used it to make over half-a-million e-prescription transactions, according to SureScripts, operator of the Pharmacy Health Information Exchange*. Only 32 physicians participated in 2005. Although growth in electronic health information exchange is accelerating, thanks in part to technological advances, monetary incentives and updated legislation, only six percent of physicians in Louisiana participated in some sort of e-prescription transaction.

Starting this month, physicians will receive bonus pay from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for e-prescribing for a three year period ending in 2012, when those still using paper prescriptions will result in reduced Medicare payments.

In order to encourage their participation in electronic health information exchange, Louisiana Health Care Review (LHCR) is leading a statewide initiative aiming to provide information about privacy and security to health care providers. At the forefront of the initiative is www.Secure4Health.org, a one-stop Web portal filled with all the information they need to make the best decisions for their practice. A second Web site, www.Secure4HealthLa.org, will launch by Feb. 1 and offer more Louisiana-specific information, including Louisiana resources and HIPAA laws, which can vary from state to state.

The Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration Provider Education Toolkit, a federal initiative launched Jan. 15 in eight pilot states, provides educational resources for health care providers interested in understanding electronic health information exchange and security and privacy best practices.

"Doctors are out there trying to survive, trying to make payroll, and trying to make a living. They're not thinking five to 15 years down the line," explained Dr. John Fleming, a family physician from Minden, La., and newly elected Congressman. "Doctors and patients and hospitals they see these systems out there, but they're all just pieces of the puzzle. It's very difficult for anyone to see the complete picture. This can help tremendously."

The Web-based toolkits offers physician-to-physician advice, resource links, and answers to frequently asked questions from national health care subject-matter experts. Health care providers can also earn free continuing medical education credits while learning more about electronic health information exchange, electronic health record systems, and related privacy and security benefits and challenges.

The initiative consists of a pilot project that runs from now until March 2009. To evaluate its impact on physicians and the health care community, the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration will analyze Web site traffic, the number of health care providers taking advantage of free continuing medical education credits, and other assessment metrics. The goal is to gather feedback from this pilot phase to develop an education and outreach toolkit for health care providers nationwide.

"The cost of electronics always goes down over time. The cost of a workforce always goes up over time," added Dr. Fleming. "As a business owner I understand how important efficiency is in improving your bottom line. I saw EMRs as the best way to do that, and it has been."

The Provider Education Toolkit is the result of work completed by the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration, a multi-year project launched in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The collaboration comprises 42 states and territories and addresses the privacy and security challenges presented by electronic health information exchange through multi-state collaboration.

For more information visit:

www.Secure4Health.org
www.Secure4HealthLa.org

About LHCR: LHCR is a leading health care improvement company whose solutions are helping to improve the lives of more than 3 million people covered by state and federal government health insurance programs in multiple states. LHCR's solutions sharply reduce unnecessary utilization of medical services, quickly generate significant savings for payers and produce nationally recognized improvements in the quality of care.

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Louisiana Rural Health Association Awards Outstanding Rural Health Professionals and Rural Health Programs

The 2008 Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA) Awards Luncheon was held on December 15th at the Lafayette Hilton and Towers. We are honored to announce the 2008 Rural Health Awards Recipients.

Rural Health Professional of the Year:

Linda Deville, CEO Bunkie General Hospital

The Rural Health Professional of the Year recognizes a direct healthcare provider (non-physician) for contribution and leadership in healthcare services to rural populations and improving access to rural people.

Rural Practitioner of the Year:

Dr. Stephen Taylor, M.D.

The Rural Health Practitioner of the Year award recognizes a direct service provider (physician) for leadership in bringing health services to rural populations.

Outstanding Rural Health Program of the Year:

LSUHSC Rural Scholars Track

The Outstanding Rural Health Program of the Year Award recognizes a statewide or regional one time or recurrent program/project that promotes the development of rural health care delivery systems.

Legislature of the Year:

Senator Sherri Smith Cheek

The Rural Legislator of the Year award recognizes a Louisiana Legislator for outstanding leadership in promoting legislation to benefit access to quality care in rural communities.

We would also like to salute the following dedicated individuals and successful outstanding program that were nominated:

Rural Practitioner of the Year:

Jerry Wayne Sessions, M.D.

Donald R. Taylor, M.D.

Outstanding Rural Program of the Year:

*Emergency Medical Services Designated Regional
Coordinator (EMS DRC) Network*

Operation H.E.A.R.T – Bunkie General

Health Enrichment Network-Seal-a Smile Program

Outstanding Rural Health Program of the Year Honored by the

Louisiana Rural Health Association

The Rural Scholars Track Program at LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans promotes rural health care throughout the state was named the best in the state on December 15, 2008 by the Louisiana Rural Health Association. The Outstanding Rural Health Program of the Year Award recognizes a statewide or regional one time or recurrent program/project that promotes the development of rural health care delivery systems.

The Rural Scholars Track was established in 2002 to recruit students who want to practice primary-care medicine. Participants, who must agree to practice in rural Louisiana, spend their first two years with classmates in New Orleans and the last two at the University Medical Center in Lafayette. "We are educating and training increasing numbers of exceptional young people to meet the medical needs of rural Louisiana, and we are grateful for the Louisiana Rural Health Association's affirmation of our access," said Dr. Larry Hollier, the Health Sciences Center chancellor, who accepted the award. Leslie Capo, center spokeswoman, stated that they program currently have Forty-three students.



Submit to the
LRHA Update
We'd love to hear from
you...
arboneaux@lrha.org

Rural Health Professional of the Year Honored by the Louisiana Rural Health Association

Linda Deville, CEO Bunkie General Hospital, was honored by the Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA) on December 15, 2008 at the LRHA Annual Rural Healthcare Awards Luncheon. The Rural Health Professional of the Year award recognizes a direct healthcare provider (non-physician) for contribution and leadership in healthcare services to rural populations and improving access to rural people.

Deville has a passion to improve health process that make a difference in people's lives. She has led Bunkie General Hospital to a high level of performance by implementing evidence-based care and protocols for coronary artery disease to improve the quality of care for cardiovascular and heart failure for patients. Deville has devoted years of service to the Better Health for the Delta Project working with ten (10) parishes located in Northeast Louisiana to reduce cardiovascular disease and stroke.

For the past year, Deville has been working on the implementation of Louisiana's Tele-Medicine Initiative for the benefit of the citizens of rural communities throughout Louisiana. This initiative includes LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport (LSUHSC-S), the Louisiana Hospital Coalition and rural hospitals located in northern Louisiana. Deville's passion lies in improving healthcare systems particularly for the rural and underserved communities which ultimately improve patient outcomes. The residents of Avoyelles Parish are all aware of her commitment to serve the community and her determination to ensure that the residents receive the best care possible from Bunkie General Hospital.



Rural Practitioner of the Year Honored by the Louisiana Rural Health Association

Stephen Taylor, M.D., was honored by the Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA) on December 15, 2008 at the LRHA Annual Rural Healthcare Awards Luncheon. The Rural Health Practitioner of the Year award recognizes a direct service provider (physician) for leadership in bringing health services to rural populations.

Dr. Stephen Taylor is a well known and respected name in north Caddo Parish. Since 1986, Dr. Taylor has devoted himself to serving north Caddo Parish as a full time family physician. In 1993, Dr. Taylor and his partner, Dr. John H. Haynes Jr., started a fellowship program at North Caddo Medical Center. They shared vision to "grow" more rural family practitioners; therefore, in 1998 they started a rural family residency program. Each year, Dr. Taylor teaches four students about the ins and outs of rural healthcare.

His dedication and passion for rural healthcare is clearly demonstrated as he became actively involved in the political arena to advocate in behalf of access to rural healthcare in Vivian Parish. In 2006, Dr. Taylor became involved with the Louisiana Medical Home Quality Forum and has followed the medical home concept for many years and formed the North Caddo Health and Education Alliance. This alliance between North Caddo Medical Center, local schools and the townspeople of North Caddo Service District, allows registered nurses to be in six (6) schools to maintain the students health in order for the students to maintain a healthy learning environment.

Dr. Taylor strives to improve the lives of the citizens of North Caddo Parish as he looks after the health and well being of the families, economy and the education of the children of North Caddo Parish.

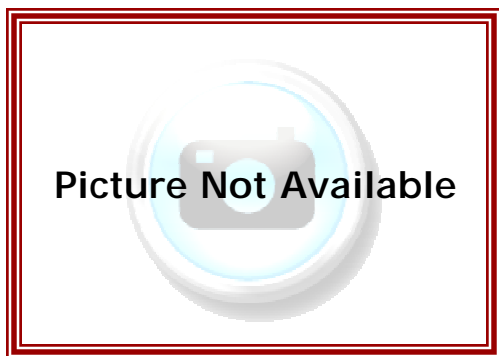


Legislator of the Year Honored by the Louisiana Rural Health Association

Senator Sherri Smith Cheek was honored by the Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA) on December 15, 2008 at the LRHA Annual Rural Healthcare Awards Luncheon for the Rural Legislator of the Year. The Rural Legislator of the Year award recognizes a Louisiana Legislator for outstanding leadership in promoting legislation to benefit access to quality care in rural communities.

Senator Cheek has been an ongoing supporter of the LSUS throughout her tenure in the Louisiana Legislature. Her most recent work with the LSUS-HSC and Rural Hospital Coalition (for the creation of the Louisiana Rural Health Information Exchange Network (LRHIX) has received local, state, regional, and national recognition. She has worked diligently with LSUS-HSC, Rural Hospital Coalition, and 24 rural hospitals within the LRHIX to secure additional funding for continuation of the project.

Senator Cheek demonstrates the wisdom and leadership in addressing the healthcare needs of rural and underserved communities throughout Louisiana.



NOT A MEMBER?

To join the LRHA, please visit our website and fill out a membership application.

JOIN NOW!

Already a member? Refer a friend to join. Tell them to visit the LRHA website.

*A Message from the
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February 6, 2009

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