

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information contact:

Rhonda Litt, Louisiana Primary Care Association
(225) 927-7662 Ext 201; e-mail rhonda@lpca.net

Angela Y. Sheffie, Louisiana Primary Care Association
(225) 927-7662 Ext 209; e-mail angela@lpca.net

“Federally Qualified Health Centers: Patient-Centered Healthcare...not just words...it’s our Mission”

Lake Charles, LA – Nearly 200 healthcare administrators, healthcare providers, community board members, national and state delegates, and other stakeholders attended the Louisiana Primary Care Association’s 26th Annual Continuing Education Conference this past week at the L’Auberge du Lac Casino Resort in Lake Charles, LA.

This year’s theme, *Federally Qualified Health Centers: Patient-Centered Healthcare...not just words...it’s our Mission*, underscored and chronicled the dedicated efforts made by the Louisiana Primary Care Association (LPCA), Louisiana’s Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and other collaborative partners in the preservation and advancement of affordable, accessible, comprehensive and culturally competent primary, dental, and mental health care services for Louisiana’s residents.

According to Eric Taylor, LPCA Board President, “The highlight of the conference emphasized the need for all health care stakeholders to work together in improving quality care and health care delivery system options.”

Expert speakers such as Dick Bohrer, Interim Director of Primary Care Association Relations for the National Association of Community Health Centers, Thomas Coughlin, Operations Director, Central Mid-Atlantic Division of HRSA Bureau of Primary Care, and Gerrelde Davis, Director of the LA Department of Health and Hospitals Bureau of Primary and Rural Health Care lectured on America’s Voice for Community Health Care, the National Primary Health Care, and the Louisiana Health First Plan, respectively.

Participants took part in and received continuing education credits in several educational sessions and workshops including clinical, health information technology, management and operations, emergency preparedness, and recruitment and retention.

“The event also provided an opportunity for community based, state and national healthcare partners to reflect on the many accomplishments made in improving access to quality healthcare for the medically underserved”, said Rhonda Litt, LPCA Executive Director. Among those acknowledged for their significant contributions to Louisiana’s Health Centers were several members of the Louisiana State Legislature, the Louisiana’s Congressional Delegation, and FQHC staff among others. Award recipients included:

U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu - Health Care Champion Award

Congressman Charlie Melancon – Health Care Champion Award
State Senator Cheryl Gray-Evans – Senator Diana Bajoie Award
State Senator Lydia Jackson – Senator Diana Bajoie Award
State Representative Karen Peterson – Rep. Charles Hudson Memorial Award
State Representative Sam Jones - Rep. Charles Hudson Memorial Award
Gerrellda Davis, MBA – Louisiana Health Care Leadership Award

Two organizations and several FQHC staff members were honored for their continued support in assisting Louisiana’s medically underserved during Louisiana’s emergency disaster response, accessing low cost prescription drugs through LPCA’s Prescription Assistance Program, and FQHC staff for going above and beyond the call of duty in patient care. Award recipients included:

Operation USA – The Guardian Award
Direct Relief – The Guardian Award
Sister Bonnie Hoffman – Walk the Talk Hero
Shannon Pfingstag – Walk the Talk Hero
Cassandra Thomas – Walk the Talk Hero
Cassandra Dixon – Pharmacy Assistance Programs
Michelle Brown – Pharmacy Assistance Programs
Janice Monk – Pharmacy Assistance Programs

Additionally, fifty-one community health center board members received their Board Member Achievement Certification for completing twelve credit hours of the Basic Skills Courses in the LPCA Louisiana Governance Academy.

To ensure a healthy future for Louisiana’s residents, the conference also incorporated a Start Living by Example Health and Wellness Extravaganza Program that featured the American Heart Association’s Start Worksite Wellness Program to strongly encourage Community Health Centers, their staff and other participating organizations to implement worksite wellness programs at their offices with their staff and also patients.

To conclude the conference, guest speakers representing various national and state levels participated in the closing panel luncheon discussion, “*What is the Evolution of Primary Care as it Relate to State Policy Changes.*” Topics of the conversations included EMR integration, transitioning to the medical model home within the LA Health First Plan, and working within the new healthcare budget constraints as health centers transition to a Coordinated Care Network.

Major contributing sponsors for the conference included Henry Schein, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, Centene Corporation, McKesson Corporation, Thotbox, EHS, and AMERIGROUP Corporation.

For more information, photos and conference highlights, please visit our website at www.lpca.net.