



HOW YOU AS A LEGISLATOR CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH HEALTHCARE IN THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

LPCA 2009 Legislative Policy Recommendations

Who is the LPCA?

- The Louisiana Primary Care Association is the state trade association of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). FQHCs are health centers that receive limited federal grant dollars to assist with offsetting the cost of providing care to uninsured and low-income residents. Louisiana has 23 FQHC core sites and 77 satellite sites statewide.
- According to the 2007 Uniform Data Systems Report, Louisiana FQHCs served 149,264 residents with **47% of FQHC patients being uninsured**.
- **The State of the State** - Louisiana currently has approximately 1,327,000 uninsured residents. (*Families USA – March 2009*)
- According to the Common Wealth Fund, Louisiana is ranked 3rd in the nation in inappropriate emergency room usage. The state is seeking to solve this problem with the implementation of Louisiana Health First and Coordinated Care Networks.
- The average cost of care for an emergency room visit is \$383. The average cost of care in one of Louisiana's FQHCs is \$136.

Louisiana Primary Care Association Policy Request

School Based Dental Policy – VOTE “NO” FOR HB 687

The Louisiana Primary Care Association is also asking the Louisiana Legislature and Governor Bobby Jindal to “oppose” any efforts to inhibit private dental providers from practicing on the campuses of schools. Currently, Louisiana is facing a dental crisis caused by a drastic shortage of dentists, and an even greater shortage of dentists who will accept Medicaid. This shortage is further complicated by the high number of Louisianians that have no form of insurance coverage.



Recently, the Louisiana Dental Association (LDA) submitted to the House of Representatives a resolution that states, "**the LDA oppose the practice of dentistry on the grounds of public schools**". The LDA practice standards referred to in the resolution interprets and recognizes the optimal (or most desirable) means of delivering dental care as in a private dental practice and in a permanently established facility.

The passage of legislation supporting this position would halt mobile dental services received by thousands of Louisiana children.

Louisiana Dental Facts

- Of 2,400 dentists in Louisiana, only 548 or 23% are participating in the Medicaid program according to DHH.
- Fifty-four (54) of 64 Louisiana parishes were designated as partial or full Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas according to DHH in April of 2008. However, since that time five more Louisiana parishes have been designated Dental HPSAs. The parishes include, Lincoln, Morehouse, Red River, East Carroll and West Carroll. **Currently, fifty-nine (59) of sixty-four Louisiana parishes are full or partial Dental HPSAs.**
- Louisiana currently has 1,071,242 Medicaid enrollees as of March 2009. Hence, only 548 or 23% of total available dentists are left to provide services for more than a Million Medicaid enrollees.
- The DHH Dental Sealant program is responsible for serving 4566 children according to the 2007 Dental Sealant program report. Furthermore, some rural areas in Louisiana "did not have oral health professionals available" to participate in the program. Some rural areas in Louisiana do not have any dentists.
- Beyond the 1 million+ Medicaid enrollees, **Louisiana has 1,327,000 UNINSURED residents that have no form of insurance.** Who will care for these residents?
- We cannot afford to inhibit access to any preventative dental services. ***According to the 2006 policy brief, "Brushing Up On Children's Oral Health", 400,000 Medicaid eligible children did not see a dentist. (the uninsured number come from, Families USA report March 2009)***



Facing such horrific health status statistics, Louisiana cannot afford to arbitrarily hinder the aid or assistance received by any qualified dental provider, including those providing mobile dental services! Halting mobile school based dental services may result in the death of Louisiana children, such as the case of Deamonte Driver, an uninsured seventh grader in Maryland that died because of a bacterial infection in the brain that spread from a tooth abscess. The state should reject recommendations by the Louisiana Dental Association or any legislation that will stop all mobile dental services performed on school grounds.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (HPSAs) DENTAL

