



### **Who is The Louisiana Primary Care Association?**

Established in 1982, the Louisiana Primary Care Association, Inc. (LPCA) is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to promote accessible, affordable, quality primary health care for the uninsured and medically underserved populations in Louisiana. It is a membership organization of 21 (49 including satellites) Federally Qualified Community Health Centers (FQHCs). LPCA directs its efforts to securing monies that will foster the development of new FQHC sites, and assuring the viability of existing sites through technical support services.

### **STATE POLICY REQUEST**

#### **Policy Request: Expand Health Care Services to an Additional 186,000 Louisianans through the expansion and development of 69 Health Center Sites**

- LPCA is currently working with Capital Link, Inc., to develop a capital funding program for FQHCs that would leverage New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) funding and HRSA or USDA Loan Guarantee Programs to maximize funding available for FQHC infrastructure development. In the program under consideration, a state investment of \$55 million in CDBG or other grant funds could leverage approximately \$38 million in NMTC private sector investments and an additional \$33 million in HRSA or USDA-guaranteed low-cost loans. This pool of \$126 million would fund the expansion and new site development of 69 health centers. The health center expansion and new access point initiative is projected to provide health care to an additional 186,000 Louisianans.

#### **Policy Request: Provide Health Care Services to an Additional 25,754 Louisiana Residents through a State Legislative Appropriation of \$5 million To Subsidize the Cost of Providing Care to the Uninsured**

- The number of uninsured Louisiana residents served by Louisiana's Health Centers has grown substantially through the years. For example, in 2003 Louisiana's Health Centers served 41,369 uninsured users. In 2004, the number of uninsured users increased by 6,468, totaling 47,837. In 2005, the number of uninsured health center users increased by 12,489, totaling 60,326 uninsured users. Louisiana's Health Centers are seeking a State Legislative Appropriation of \$5 million dollars offset the cost of providing care to an additional 25,754 uninsured Louisiana residents. **An application has been submitted to Senator Mary Landrieu for the legislative appropriation.**

#### **Background and Key Facts about Health Centers**

- Subsequent to the tragedies of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Health officials within the state have deemed FQHCs as a viable option for public and private partnering as Louisiana reengineers its fragile health care infrastructure. Louisiana is currently ranked 50th in the nation in poor health indicators and the cost of health care is spiraling upward due to unwarranted emergency room (ER) visits to Louisiana's charity hospitals. The average cost per ER visit is \$383. Nevertheless, the average cost to see that same patient in one of Louisiana's Health Center is \$130. Louisiana's federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) are the viable provider choice for Louisiana's Medicaid population and uninsured residents. Research has shown that Medicaid saves on average 30% on the dollar for every user that receives healthcare at a health center in comparison to other providers. Moreover, the compensation model of Louisiana's FQHCs leverage the federal dollar with what the patron is able to pay (sliding fee-scale), and thereby reduces the uncompensated cost of providing care to uninsured Louisianans. Moreover, the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana endorses the increase of FQHCs as a solution to providing healthcare to La's uninsured residents. Louisiana currently has 761,000 uninsured residents.



## NATIONAL POLICY REQUEST

### **Policy Request: Reauthorize the Federally Qualified Health Center Program**

Health Centers urge Congress to preserve the core elements of the Health Centers program by: (1) reauthorizing the current statute for 8 years, through FY 2015, in order to preserve the essential principles of the Health Centers program, (2) include specific funding targets for growth to reach 30 million underserved people by 2015, and (3) reauthorize other key programs, including the National Health Service Corps, and critical Health Professions programs. The **National Health Service Corps** plays a critical role in providing care for underserved individuals. The program dispatches clinicians to urban and rural communities with serious shortages of health care providers. Currently 3,900 NHSC clinicians, including physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurse midwives, and behavioral health professionals, provide health care services to nearly 5 million Americans. About half of all NHSC providers are at health center sites – which are located in many of the most underserved communities in the country.

### **Policy Request: Increase Health Center Funding by \$225 Million in FY2008**

Health Centers urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to continue the expansion of the Health Centers program in order to bring high-quality, affordable primary and preventive care to new individuals and communities in need. To show support for these increases, House Members can cosign the Pallone/Deal Letter, and Senators can cosign the Stabenow/Bond Letter. Appropriations Committee Members are asked to add a similar request to their personal request (“wish list”) to the Committee Chairman.

### **Policy Request: Reauthorize and Fully Fund the SCHIP program, Support Legislation Implementing Key Provisions of the HHS Farm Worker Report, and Clarify Key Provisions of the Deficit Reduction Act**

By reauthorizing and fully funding SCHIP, and providing states the option to offer SCHIP coverage to legal income-eligible immigrant women and children, the Congress will help ensure access to quality health care for more of the nearly 8.3 million uninsured children nationwide, the majority of whom are already eligible for SCHIP today.

### **Policy Request: Congress Should Expand the Availability of Health Insurance to Every Individual: Health Centers Support Expanded Insurance Coverage Options and Inclusion in FEHBP**

Health centers ask Congress to protect and expand health coverage opportunities and access to care. Nearly 47 million individuals are without health insurance and lack access to affordable care they desperately need. Additionally, due to the rising costs of health insurance, many health centers are struggling to provide health insurance to their own employees. Health centers urge Congress to support state-initiated efforts to improve access to both coverage and care through enactment of the “Health Partnership Act.”

In addition, in order to assist health centers reduce their own health insurance costs, health centers ask Congress to pass legislation to allow health centers to participate in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).

### **Policy Request: Advance Health Centers' Ability to Care for America's Elderly: Congress Should Revise the Health Centers' Payment Cap and Update the List of Covered Services**

To enable health centers to provide essential Medicare-covered primary and preventive services to growing numbers of seniors and disabled living in underserved areas, health centers ask Members of Congress to update the payment cap for health centers, and to finish the job of updating the definition of Medicare FQHC services to include all Medicare-covered ambulatory care services provided by a health center.