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Federally Qualified Health Centers Week August 9-15, 2009

Website: www.healthcenterweek.com

Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) are community based primary care entities that receive grant funding through Section 330 of the Public Health Services Act as amended by the Health Centers Consolidation Act of 1996. These partially federally funded entities are strategically placed within areas deemed as health professional shortage areas (HPSAs) by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA Bureau of Primary Care for the purpose of alleviating health disparities through the provision of comprehensive, high-quality and affordable healthcare services. Nationally, FQHCs are responsible for providing health care services to over 18 million Americans and locally to over 149,000 Louisiana residents.

Federally qualified health centers are community owned and operated due to federal regulations that require a 51% majority consumer governing board. The board composition helps to insure that services offered are culturally and linguistically sensitive to the needs of the community in which it serves. Moreover, FQHCs serve as a medium for reducing a number of barriers that frustrate the patron's ability to access health care services. For example, FQHCs charge patients without insurance based on a sliding-fee scale, this helps to insure affordability. FQHCs also provide a comprehensive array of services including primary care, dental and mental health services. They also assist with the availability of affordable medications through the 340B program and prescription assistance programs.

During the second week of August each year by Presidential Proclamation, Americans throughout the country commemorate FQHCs for their service and commitment to America's underserved communities through what is formally referred to as "***National Health Center Week***" (NHCW). Furthermore, health centers in Louisiana are honored by a formal proclamation issued by the Governor recognizing the second week of August as "***Federally Qualified Health Centers Week***". This year NHCW is commenced between the dates of August 9-15, 2009. We would like to invite you to visit the FQHC nearest you. Several FQHCs will be hosting special events in conjunction with this grand occasion. For more information about the event in your area go to www.healthcenterweek.com.

For more information about the *Federally Qualified Health Center* nearest you go to www.lpca.net or contact Donald Hunter at 225 927-7662 ext. 206.