

LOUISIANA



**Department of
HEALTH and
HOSPITALS**

Alan Levine
Secretary

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Contact: Bureau of Media & Communications; 225-342-1532

Federal Grant Funds Help New Orleans-Area Health Care Providers Continue to Grow and Improve Services

Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant program awards addition funds

Baton Rouge – The Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant (PCASG) program has announced its third round of grant funding totaling \$16,639,000 to 25 public and private non-profit healthcare provider organizations which operate 70 clinic locations in the New Orleans area.

Funding from the PCASG program helps improve access to primary healthcare, mental health counseling and treatment and other critically needed services for everyone in the greater New Orleans area, regardless of ability to pay. To date, including grant awards made in September 2007 and December 2007, PCASG has released more than \$43 million to bridge gaps in services.

“Between September of last year and March of this year, the 70 PCASG-funded clinics provided medical and/or behavioral healthcare to over 80,000 people. Furthermore, many of the grant recipients have opened new clinic locations and expanded hours to accommodate the great needs in the region that persist since Hurricane Katrina ” reports Clayton Williams, Director of Health Systems Development for the Louisiana Public Health Institute.

For example, PCASG grant funds have allowed Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (CCANO) to add clinicians and expand clinic service hours to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday and add weekend (Saturday) hours from 9am until 1pm at the Metairie Road clinic, 413 Metairie Road in Metairie.

Additionally, a new Westbank clinic was opened recently at 3520 General DeGaulle Drive in New Orleans. Continued funding will even allow CCANO social workers to get advanced training in behavioral health intervention.

“Prior to receiving this grant funding, Catholic Charities was operating with grants from United Way and other small foundations that enabled us to provide only limited services, despite the great need for access to care in New Orleans,” says Dr. Elmore Rigamer, Medical Director for Catholic Charities. “The funding stream has allowed us, not only to increase access to care, but also increase the quality of care we provide to the under and uninsured populations.”

Meanwhile, PCASG funding has enabled Children's Hospital Medical Practice Corporation (CHMPC) to provide primary care services for the next three years for the organization's new Kids First clinics in eastern New Orleans and Mid-City. PCASG has also provided supplemental funding for a new Rapid Treatment Program, a behavioral health outpatient clinic located at the hospital's Calhoun Campus, the hospital's Tooth Bus initiative which provides outreach dental services, and CHMPC's Kids First TigerCARE (on Canal Street) and Kids First Prytania (on Prytania Street).

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"Our mission is to provide pediatric primary care to children in and around New Orleans including medically underserved areas," says Birgit Haylock, Director of CHMPC. "The funding through PCASG is helping us expand our services into two medically underserved areas as well as helping support other programs and helps us achieve our goal of increasing services to the New Orleans pediatric population."

The three-year, \$100 million Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant is designed to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services in the four-parish greater New Orleans area while decreasing the reliance on emergency room usage for primary care services. PCASG was awarded to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services last year. The Louisiana Public Health Institute is administering the grant as the state's local partner.

Funds have been awarded to healthcare provider organizations in order to assist with stabilization, restoration and expansion of outpatient primary and behavioral healthcare services. Public and private non-profit organizations serving Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard or Plaquemines parishes were eligible for funding through the grant, including primary medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment providers.

To find out where primary care clinics are located throughout the region, visit www.pcasg.org. For more information on the PCASG program and the latest round of grant funding, contact Clayton Williams at 504-301-9804.

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