



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Dec. 29, 2009
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FREE MEDICATION PROGRAM EXPANDS STATEWIDE

ALEXANDRIA – A program that has been providing free prescriptions to eligible Central Louisiana residents since 2001 is now offered statewide.

The Rapides Foundation launched the Cenla Medication Access Program in 2001 to serve residents in Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn parishes. Thirty more parishes were added in 2008 when CMAP formed a partnership with the Louisiana Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health.

In November, the coverage area officially became the entire state.

“We had always hoped we would be able to extend our services beyond our original service area,” said Program Director Wendy Roy, who has led CMAP since its inception. “It is wonderful to know that all Louisianans who qualify and need help with their medications will now be able to get services.”

The Foundation formed CMAP after research indicated that a significant number of Central Louisiana residents on fixed incomes did not have prescription benefits. Since then, CMAP has helped more than 22,000 people receive free prescriptions.

Joe Rosier, president and chief executive officer of The Rapides Foundation, said CMAP has helped to save lives, especially in these economic hard times when people are forced to make a decision between paying bills and purchasing medicine. “With CMAP, they don't have to skip their life-saving medications. It keeps people healthier, and that means fewer hospital stays and emergency room visits.”

Gerrelde Davis, director of the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, said the bureau brought in experts from around the country to find a medication access program that would most

benefit the state. “CMAP had that infrastructure and it was closely related to one of those programs that we were really looking to replicate in the state,” she said. “We thought this would be a better bang for the state’s resources.”

Anyone who needs help paying for their prescriptions is asked to call 1-888-443-7494 or visit www.cmaprx.org. CMAP’s staff can screen the individual over the phone to determine eligibility. If eligible, the applicant will be required to complete a form and provide proper financial documentation. CMAP then will work with the applicant and his physician to fill the applicant’s necessary prescriptions. This program, along with the medications, is offered free of charge.

CMAP is funded by The Rapides Foundation, a philanthropic organization dedicated to improving the health status of Central Louisiana. CMAP’s expansion statewide is partly funded by the Department of Health and Hospitals under the Bureau of Rural Health and Primary Care.