

NEODATA/CUBS

- POPULATION SPECIFIC ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS FOR NEONATES AND INFANTS -

The NeoData/Cubs program has been implemented to improve the quality of life for children born prematurely within the state of Louisiana. For many years, we have been unable to adequately track children born to indigent parents due to their movement in and out of the public hospital and state healthcare systems. Various programs now offered to indigent children, including Medicaid, LaCHIP, Kidmed and WIC, give parents a greater range of options for seeking care for their children in both the public and private arenas. As an example, a child may be born prematurely in a private facility with NICU services and when their Medicaid funding is exhausted they may seek treatment within the public systems of care, including Louisiana's public hospitals and state run clinics. Due to this non-continuity of care, records of the child's earlier healthcare may be unavailable to the groups of physicians now treating him or her. These records are particularly important for children born prematurely or for those born with complex health issues. Knowledge about the child's previous conditions may be unknown or misunderstood by the parents. This shortage of knowledge related to the child's medical history may cause the physician to misdiagnose or have to use excessive testing to re-evaluate the child's situation, wasting large amounts of time, medical resources and healthcare dollars.

NeoData/Cubs is a statewide initiative led by LSU Neonatologists that involves both the private and public systems of healthcare within the state. The program allows providers to access medical histories and research outcomes related to risk factors present at a birth, as well as look at health care practices in the hospital setting and follow-up practices in the clinical setting after the child is discharged. The program allows the sharing of data between these groups to assure continuity of care for the youngest members of our society. The child's experiences in the hospital as well as in follow-up clinics are linked into a single database that can track the child from birth through the seventeenth year. Economic analyses of medical practices in relation to health, developmental, educational, and quality of life outcomes are monitored and shared... both to assure good healthcare outcomes and to save precious state resources. Another major goal of the program is to help with the development of best practice guidelines by using the program as a research tool into the care of newborns in Louisiana.