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# CHANCELLOR'S *Notes*



June 1, 2012

## Hurricane season begins

Today marks the first day of the Atlantic hurricane season which will run until November 30. Now is the time to complete your personal plans if you haven't already and to make sure you are familiar with LSUHSC's policy, CM 51, posted on the LSUHSC website.



Now is also the time to update your access to communications. Please make sure your department has your current contact info and if you haven't registered for the Health Science's emergency text messaging system, you can find details on our website at <http://www.lsuhscc.edu/alerts>.

In addition to email, the web, telephone trees, and traditional media, we will also use the official LSUHSC Twitter account, @LSUHSCHealth, which you can follow at <http://www.twitter.com/LSUHSCHealth>. ■

## LSUHSC leads LA effort to provide mental health services in oil spill affected areas

LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans has been provisionally awarded a \$14.4 million grant over five years through the BP Oil Spill Settlement Agreement to fund mental and behavioral health treatment and longer-term supportive services to people and communities affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Dr. Howard Osofsky, Professor and Chairman of Psychiatry, and Dr. Joy Osofsky, Professor and Head of the Division of Pediatric Mental Health at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, are the project leaders of the Mental and Behavioral Health Capacity Project in Louisiana.



The mental health project is one of the four projects that make up the Gulf Region Health Outreach Program developed by BP and counsel representing certain plaintiffs in the Deepwater Horizon litigation in the US District Court in New Orleans. Supervised by the court, the program is funded with \$105 million from the BP Deepwater Horizon Medical Settlement. LSU Health Sciences



Center New Orleans helped to establish a coalition of collaborating partners in the four affected states including the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of South Alabama, the University of West Florida, Tulane University, and the Louisiana Public Health Institute dedicated to work together to implement the goals of the

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four integrated projects of the Gulf Region Health Outreach Program. The other three projects address primary care, environmental health and literacy, and training of community health workers.

Based on data gathered by the LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans Departments of Psychiatry and Pediatrics through more than 2,000 surveys assessing the psychosocial status of people in the affected areas after the spill, there are significant mental health needs directly attributable to the Deepwater Horizon incident. LSUHSC will work together with its partners to provide the immediate and critical mental and behavioral health services that are needed while the Primary Care Capacity Project is planning and implementing its efforts to increase the mental and behavioral health capacity of FQHCs (federally qualified health centers) and community health clinics. The team will also work with the Primary Care Capacity Project to develop FQHCs and community clinics into high-quality “one-stop shops” for primary care and mental and behavioral health care once the short-term treatment services are completed.

The target population in Louisiana will include adults, children, and families who were affected by the Deepwater Horizon incident in Lafourche, Cameron, Terrebonne, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Orleans, and Plaquemines parishes. Services will include assessments, consultation, training, education, counseling, psychotherapeutic services, psychiatric treatment, resilience building, brief interventions, and support groups. Integrated services are very helpful both in reducing mental health problems and in improving response to medical treatment. Each state's program team, along with community stakeholders, will tailor state plans to meet their specific community needs.

Mental and behavioral health services will be made available to children and families in locations where needs are the most immediate and pressing such as in school settings. Meeting the needs of children who have been traumatized not only improves children's ability to achieve their potential but reduces the likelihood of future medical problems.

The judge ruled the program can begin this month, and project leaders have been meeting and planning to hit the ground running.

