

'Cover the Uninsured Week' kicks off at Cabrini

The Town Talk
April 29, 2008

Christus St. Frances Cabrini Hospital kicked off Cover the Uninsured Week on Monday with proclamations from Alexandria Mayor Jacques Roy and Pineville Mayor Clarence Fields, as well as remarks from guest speaker Congressman Rodney Alexander.

Part of the proclamation issued by the city of Pineville reads: "The uninsured live sicker and die younger."

The intent of the nationwide movement is to provide information and awareness about a variety of proposals to help with coverage problems of the uninsured.

"Living without health coverage is a growing problem that touches so many of our working families," said Stephen Wright, president and CEO of Christus Health Central Louisiana. "That is why it is so important for Christus St. Frances Cabrini Hospital and our community to come together to demand that our lawmakers find solutions and ensure that all American

families are covered. "

Wright spoke to a gathering of hospital employees in The Reflection Room of the hospital.

"We're the lucky ones," Wright said. "Pretty much everyone in this room has coverage or access to coverage."

An estimated 47 million Americans don't. And 9 million of them are children.

Christus Health currently provides assistance to help patients, residents and/or their family members enroll in public coverage programs including Medicaid and Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Programs (LaCHIP) and locate other community resources that may improve their well-being.

"On the state and federal side, we've seen an expansion of LaCHIP," Wright said. This includes a raise in income limit to apply for assistance through LaCHIP.

LaCHIP benefits include doctor visits, hospital care, shots, prescriptions and much more. Louisiana citizens can enroll in LaCHIP at no cost if they earn less

than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Alexander is a proponent of LaCHIP.

"The state of Louisiana has done an outstanding job in the delivery" of LaCHIP's services, said Alexander, who represents Louisiana's 5th Congressional District -- the ninth poorest in the nation.

Cover the Uninsured Week intends to reach out to families in Alexander's district and across the state.

"Many are not insured simply because they don't know about (programs)," Alexander said.

As part of this outreach, Christus Health will administer four programs this week: Appearances by the hospital's Department of Community Services at fingerprinting activities in three local Head Start centers today; and participation in school health fairs at LaSalle Junior High School on Wednesday, Ferriday Junior High School on Thursday and South Grant Elementary on Friday.

For information about Cover the Uninsured Week, go to www.cabrini.org or www.covertheuninsured-week.org.