

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAFE CENTER MOVES TO NEW HOME IN LSU INTERIM HOSPITAL

Baton Rouge (August 20, 2007) – The LSU Interim Hospital will open the permanent location of its SAFE Center Monday, August 20, 2007, with a ribbon cutting at 10:00 AM.

Sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) at the SAFE Center care for patients who are victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. The SANE conducts a thorough medical history and interviews the patient to ascertain details of the sexual assault.

Based on the interview and clinical observation, the SANE collects forensic evidence, which is given to law enforcement agencies for crime-lab analysis. The SANE also provides expert testimony when a case goes to trial.

“The SAFE Center is a vital component of our medical and judicial safety net,” said Dr. Dwayne Thomas, hospital administrator for LSU Interim Hospital. “The evidence that the sexual assault nurse examiners collect can be critical in trying a case.”

The first of its kind in Louisiana, the SAFE Center sees about 20 patients a month, which is about 60% of the number of patients it saw before Hurricane Katrina.

“Sexual assault nurse examiners offer patients care they may not otherwise receive,” said Dr. Cathi Fontenot, medical director for LSU Interim Hospital. “The training and experience that the SANEs bring to post-Katrina New Orleans are critical components in the recovery of our health care system.”

The SAFE Center at the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans was closed after Hurricane Katrina. It reopened in October 2005 in tents in the parking lot next to University Hospital. It then moved with the hospital to the Convention Center, Lord & Taylor Department Store location, and to four consecutive locations in LSU Interim Hospital.

The ribbon cutting will mark the opening of the permanent location of the SAFE Center, on the first floor of LSU Interim Hospital, beside the Emergency Room.

The fifth largest public hospital system in the country, the LSU Health Care Services Division is the medical provider for almost 20% of Louisiana’s population. It has over 60,000 admissions, 350,000 patient days, 1 million outpatient visits, and over 350,000 emergency department visits. Each year 1700 residents from the LSU and Tulane schools of medicine and Ochsner Health System and 4,000 nurses and allied health students from many colleges and universities are trained in LSU HCSD facilities.

LSU HCSD is the largest single provider of uncompensated inpatient care in Louisiana and provides over 95% of the health care for Louisiana's prisoners. LSU hospitals have an economic impact of over \$1.6 billion in asset business activity, \$918 million in personal earnings, and support over 10,000 jobs.

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