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LSU Forum Examines Health-Care Disparities And Access to Care

Leading Advocate for the Poor Presents Merv Trail Lectureship

Baton Rouge (January 14, 2008) -- The 11th annual LSU Health Care Services Division (HCSD) Health Care Effectiveness Forum, entitled "Eliminating Disparities and Improving Access to Relationship-Centered Care," will be January 15, 2008, at the Holiday Inn Select, 4728 Constitution Avenue, Baton Rouge, La., from 9 AM to 5 PM.

LSU HCSD is redesigning patient-care delivery and improving access to its systems of care. Conference presenters will show how redesign and improvement result in better clinical outcomes, will examine concepts and examples of health-care quality, and will evaluate LSU HCSD progress in health care over the past decade.

"Our implementation and improvement of our disease management programs during the past ten years have given us patient outcomes that match or surpass many others nationwide," said Dr. Michael Butler, acting LSU HCSD CEO. "We have also achieved significant savings while making these improvements."

Dr. Butler will present an overview of the next steps LSU HCSD will make to improve health care and access, including the emerging concept of medical homes. Dr. Daniel Duffy, senior advisor to the president of the American Board of Internal Medicine, will discuss relationship-centered care and the practice of traditional medicine, dispelling the notion that physicians need to be compassionate yet remain detached in the practice of medicine.

Dr. Paul Haidet, associate professor of medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine, will discuss patient-clinician communication and important care processes, such as information sharing and decision-making. Good communication results in fewer medical errors, less litigation, and favorable social, psychological, and biological outcomes.

Dr. Lisa Newman, associate professor of surgery and director of Breast Care Center of the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center, will discuss survival in African-American and white American breast-cancer patients and clinical issues surrounding ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

Nationwide, women who are diagnosed with breast cancer and are uninsured or enrolled in Medicaid when they initiate therapy are about 2.5 times more likely to be diagnosed at stage III or IV disease than women enrolled in private health insurance and, therefore, experience lower survival rates, more debilitating treatment outcomes, and greater long-term treatment-related morbidity. HCSD hospitals have eliminated many of these disparities.

Reducing risk factors for diabetes complications can provide marked benefits to patients with diabetes including decreased incidence of diseases of the eye, nervous system, and kidneys and other end-stage complications; improvements in quality of life, symptom distress, and physical functioning; and economic benefits, such as higher retained employment and less absenteeism.

The economic impact extends beyond the immediate, suggesting that investment in clinical systems to improve diabetes care may benefit both payers and patients. Drs. Jolene Johnson, associate professor, Earl K. Long Medical Center Department of Internal Medicine and LSU HCSD statewide diabetes disease management leader, and Ronald Horswell, LSU HCSD associate professor of biostatistics, will examine LSU HCSD diabetes disease management, noting successes and opportunities for improvement. They will also discuss how disparities have been eliminated for HCSD patients by the implementation of the Diabetes disease management program.

Dr. Ron Anderson, president and chief executive officer of Parkland Health & Hospital System in Dallas, Texas, will present the 2007 Merv Trail Lectureship, entitled "Improving Health Care Access: Integrating Public Health and Preventive Health Services into the Safety Net."

Dr. Anderson is one of the nation's leading advocates of health care for the poor. Chair of the Center for Community Responsive Care in Boston and a member of the National Health Policy Initiative as an advisor to the White House on health-care issues, he is concerned that the corporatization of the health-care industry may abandon the disenfranchised.

In 1985, he played a major role in the passage of landmark legislation on indigent health care in Texas banning "patient dumping" — the practice of transferring medically unstable patients from private to public hospitals because of patients' inability to pay. He became a national spokesperson on this issue, which led to federal legislation signed into law April 7, 1986, by President Reagan.

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.

For more information, contact Marvin McGraw, Director of Communications and Media Relations, LSU Health Care Services Division, 225.922.1424 or mmcgra@lsuhsc.edu.