

WWW.LSUHOSPITALS.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congressman Charlie Melancon Lends a Hand to Chabert Pediatric Clinic Literacy Program

Baton Rouge (July 31, 2009)—U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon will participate as a reader in Reach Out and Read (ROR) at the Pediatric Clinic of Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center (LJCMC), 1978 Industrial Blvd., Houma, Louisiana, on Tuesday, August 4, at 3:00 p.m.

Congressman Melancon serves Louisiana's Third Congressional District. Michel Claudet, Terrebonne Parish President, will also be in attendance.

The event will highlight the year-round efforts of the LJCMC and ROR to promote crucial literacy skills with parents and their children. Last year LJCMC distributed 2,820 books as prescribed books to children during clinic visits.

"Caring for the whole child is part of the mission of Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center," said Rhonda Green, LJCMC hospital administrator. "The acquisition of literacy skills is critical for one to lead a healthy life."

When it comes to promoting literacy with parents and children, the messenger matters. The Pediatric Clinic has a team of eight to 10 doctors and residents and five nursing staff who participate in Reach Out and Read. They also instruct medical students on the benefits of the program.

At all pediatric check-ups for patients from the ages of 6 months to 5 years, medical providers versed in the benefits of literacy development speak with parents about the importance of reading aloud to their children and give developmentally-appropriate books to their patients to take home.

Besides encouraging literacy in families, another positive feature of ROR is the early detection of literacy delay. Last year LJCMC ROR identified 11 children and referred them to early intervention programs in the community.

Advising parents to read aloud to their children reinforces the parent's role as the first and most important teacher. ROR also gives families a critical tool—children's books. By the time a ROR child arrives in kindergarten, the child will have received 10 new, carefully chosen books and will be well on the way to building a home library.

ROR Louisiana started in 1995 at the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans and has 58 ROR locations, which annually serve 50,474 children and annually distribute 99,000 books.

The participation of Louisiana ROR in the national ROR program is part of a national movement in pediatric primary care to influence parents to prepare their children to enter school ready to learn.

With the endorsement of the American Academy of Pediatrics and funding from the federal government, ROR is part of a national network of 4,535 clinics and hospitals in all 50 states, serving 3.8 million children and their families each year.

The LSU Health System - Health Care Services Division is one of the largest public health care delivery systems in the country. It has over 35,000 inpatient admissions, nearly 196,000 inpatient days, 515,500 outpatient clinic visits, 894,000 outpatient encounters, and nearly 244,000 emergency department visits. Each year nearly 500 residents and fellows from the LSU and Tulane Schools of Medicine and Ochsner Health System and 2,200 nurses and allied health students from many colleges and universities are trained in LSU facilities.

LSU is the largest single provider of uncompensated inpatient care in Louisiana. LSU HCSD hospitals have an economic impact of over \$1.4 billion in asset business activity, \$568 million in personal earnings, and generate over 12,000 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.

