



State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health

January 23, 2013

The Honorable David Heitmeier, Chair
Senate Health and Welfare Committee
3501 Holiday Drive, Suite 225
New Orleans, LA 70114

The Honorable Scott Simon, Chair
House Health and Welfare Committee
71667 Leveson Street, Suite 3
Abita Springs, LA 70420

Report to the Legislature-HCR 112 of 2012

Dear Chairman Heitmeier and Chairman Simon:

This correspondence is submitted in response to House Concurrent Resolution 112 of 2012, which requested that the Department of Health and Hospitals assesses the viability of establishing public health research centers in medically underserved areas of Louisiana. The Department and its public and private partners already engage in several efforts to address healthcare issues in medically underserved areas. We believe that these efforts are making a difference in medically underserved areas.

As policy planners, we recognize that communities and individuals in rural areas have different lifestyles, density, health care, economics, geography, and cultural diversity than urban areas. These differences are important to us and our partners as we make policy decisions that impact the citizens of Louisiana, a quarter of whom reside in rural areas. Decisions regarding education, income, poverty, and health variances in medically underserved communities must consider these differences.

Public health research centers (PRCs) as described in HCR 112, are much like prevention research centers that were authorized by Congress in 1984 and funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC PRC program directs a national network of 37 academic research centers at either a school of public health or a medical school that has a preventive medicine residency program. The program includes partnerships within academia, community, and public health who conduct applied public health research. Prevention research is used to encourage the extensive use of practices shown to promote good health.

Louisiana currently has one PRC that is funded at Tulane University. The focus of the PRC at Tulane is on the impact of the physical and social environment on obesity. Tulane studies the effect of interventions that change environmental factors to promote physical activity or reduce excess caloric intake using community-based participatory research methods. Specifically, Tulane is conducting a four-part study to assess how family conditions, the availability of healthy foods, participation in community health programs, and other factors shape New Orleans residents' diet over time. Tulane has conducted research in special interest projects that have addressed some of the following priority policy areas: oral health, tobacco,

school health, women's health, cancer prevention and control, epilepsy, nutrition, and physical activity.

In addition to Tulane, the Department collaborates with all of the universities listed in the legislation and other health care stakeholders including hospitals, nursing homes, federally qualified health centers, and rural health centers. Much of this work is done through the Department's Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health (the Bureau). The Bureau currently works with the Tulane Prevention Research Center and Pennington Biomedical Research Center (PBRC) through both formal and informal agreements. These research centers are conducting studies specific to health conditions identified in HCR 112 which includes diabetes, sickle cell anemia, Tay-Sachs, Parkinson's disease, and hypertension. Further, in July 2012, the Bureau coordinated with the Tulane PRC to identify strategies that could expand the scope of their research into the rural communities of Louisiana.

The Bureau and PBRC work in partnership on health issues that focus on practices and research to promote good health in communities. Attached for your review are *Table 1: Specific Disease Studies*, which provides additional details on the research being conducted by PBRC and *Table 2: Review of Neighboring States Strategies* for their PRCs as examined by the Bureau in its research.

Evidence shows that access to primary care helps improve outcomes and reduces disparities and health care costs. While Louisiana still lingers at the bottom of most national health rankings, the state is making progress through its partnerships to invest in and make improvements in accessing quality health care in medically underserved areas. The work of the Department with its partners is to remove barriers brought on as a result of such factors as physician shortages, geography and cultural barriers.

DHH is improving access to primary care and preventive health services through targeted efforts that directly support public-private partnerships for public health research, such as:

- Transforming Medicaid's delivery of health care to place a greater percentage of individuals within a medical home and under the care of a primary care physician;
- Completing a statewide community assessment project that helped to identify critical population health needs. The assessment provides information to empower local communities to tackle their own health barriers and develop local solutions to improve health over the next five years.
- Collaborating with community, public and private partners to develop a state health improvement plan that will establish priorities and strategies for viable solutions to help improve community health status and for overall health system improvements.

A resilient and sustainable consortium is imperative to address critical health care needs in medically underserved areas. Louisiana can make progress in this endeavor under the direction of community leaders and through collaborations with stakeholders, local partners, academia, health care providers, advocates, elected leaders, and rural health organizations. Medically underserved areas are unique and their issues are not easily resolved with global, state-driven policy direction. DHH is working to improve access to primary care and preventive health through targeted efforts, but more can be done at parish and local levels.

If you need additional information or have any questions about the efforts of the Department to assess the viability of public health research centers in Louisiana, please do not hesitate to contact me at (225) 342-8093 or by email at jtlane@la.gov.

Sincerely,



J. T. Lane, Assistant Secretary
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health

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"AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER"

TABLE 1: SPECIFIC DISEASE STUDIES – IMPACTING HCR 112 LEGISLATION

Research Center:	Relevant Diseases Studied:	Programs	Clinical Trials	Research Topics / Laboratories
		Affinity I		Affinity & Gene Regulation
Pennington Biomedical Research Center	Diabetes	Pennington Nutrition Series		
		<p>These are a collection of fact sheets addressing topics in nutrition and health. These printouts are free and available to the public. Topics included feature: Complications of Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome, T/1 & T/2 Diabetes, and can be downloaded from the PBRC website @ http://www.pbrc.edu/training-and-education/pennington-nutrition-series/?pnstypeid=4</p>	<p>Purpose is to determine the efficacy & safety of an investigational medication (inhaled insulin) to help lower blood glucose levels in patients with T/1 Diabetes over 9 months. Study includes individuals 18 years or older, and involves compensation.</p>	<p>This research is conducted to address two questions: (1) why does inflammation occur in obesity? (2) How does inflammation regulate insulin resistance?</p>
				John S. Mclehenry Skeletal Muscle Physiology
				<p>The goal of this laboratory is to understand and characterize the molecular mechanism(s) of mitochondrial dysfunction in skeletal muscle and its relationship to obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes mellitus, and aging.</p>
				John S. Mclehenry Botanica Research
				<p>The mission of our laboratory is to study the cellular mechanisms in insulin-sensitive tissues that contribute to the development of insulin resistance on a whole body level in humans.</p>
				Joint Program on Diabetes, Endocrinology, & Metabolism

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				The Joint Program on Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Metabolism is a single academic program across two distinct campuses of the LSU System. Specifically, the Joint Program represents a collaborative effort between the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge and the LSU Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) School of Medicine in New Orleans. The purpose of the Joint Program is to enhance the research, education, and medical care in diabetes, endocrinology, and metabolism by aligning both institutions, so as to promote collaboration, facilitate sharing of resources, and avoid duplication of efforts.
				Mechanisms of Diabetes Complication The Mechanisms of Diabetes Complications laboratory's mission is to understand the pathogenesis of diabetes complications, especially neuropathy.
				Oxidative Stress & Disease The goal of this laboratory is to understand the role of free radicals—reactive oxygen and nitrogen species—in the development of various diseases and symptoms, with an emphasis on diabetes, obesity, and insulin resistance.

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	SICKLE CELL ANEMIA	N/A	N/A	N/A
	There were no current investigations found being conducted on Sickle Cell Anemia by the PBRC.			
	TAY-SACHS	N/A	N/A	N/A
	There were no current investigations found being conducted on Tay-Sachs Disease by the PBRC.			
	PARKINSON'S DISEASE	1st Annual Parkinson's Conference	N/A	N/A
	While there were no current investigations being conducted on Parkinson's disease, there are programs/functions being implemented for its communication:	The PBRC hosted a Conference on 8/11/12 – This was a free community education event for Parkinson's Patients, caregivers and providers. Speakers will be present in order to relay current & future treatments, symptoms, and nutritional interventions among other topics.		
	HYPERTENSION	The DASHdiet Eating Plan (DASH – Dietary Approaches to Stopping Hypertension)	Sprint	

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Research Center:	Relevant Diseases Studied:	Programs	Clinical Trials	Research Topics / Laboratories
	While there were no current investigations being conducted on Hypertension, there are programs and trials being implemented for its communication and prevention.	A guideline for dietary consumption within the Pennington Nutrition Series. The plan addresses topics such as: Maintaining High Blood Pressure, Hypertension, & Pre-hypertension by outlining eating plans involving the substitution of lower calorie fruits and vegetables for unhealthy higher calorie foods.	A compensated clinical trial centered on Cholesterol/Blood Pressure for seniors ages 50 or older with a multi-year duration.	N/A

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Arkansas	Mississippi	Texas
<p>University of Arkansas For Medical Sciences Arkansas Prevention Research Center (ARPRC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Pilot study in five counties of the Delta region to determine the best ways to increase family-school engagement in addressing issues of childhood obesity and overweight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creation of two toolkits ▪ Toolkits will be distributed to parents and school officials • Tested for feasibility, acceptability, and use within the target groups • Walker Eye Research Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Diseases Studied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age- Related Macular Degeneration ▪ Anterior Uveitis ▪ Blepharitis ▪ Diabetic macular edema ▪ Dry eye disease ▪ Glaucoma ▪ Nonarteric Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy. ◦ Current Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If use of eye drops called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) have a positive effect on macular edema. • Jackson T. Stephen Spine and Neuroscience Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Pain Management ◦ Research cures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deafness, head/neck cancer, thyroid cancer, allergies, etc. 	<p>University of Southern Mississippi Health Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.U. B City Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Promote and engage Hattiesburg resident in physical activity and healthy food choices • Healthy Living: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Program to provides women education on healthy cooking, BMI, blood pressure assessments, and food intake throughout program • Aging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hydration ◦ Keeping students in school properly hydrated ◦ Study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be allowed to carry water bottles inside class • Results: more alert, less consumption of soda, decreased in hunger pangs, fewer headaches, less trash on campus, etc ◦ Current Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Center for Minority Health ◦ Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Current Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addressing health disparities through local cancer control profiling ◦ To begin a 	<p>University of Texas Prevention Research Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sex Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pregnancy, HIV and STD prevention programs in school ◦ Adolescent Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine how health risk behaviors change over time and learn what factors influence changes ▪ identify disparities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implement policies and programs to improve health in adolescents ◦ Prostate Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How AS(active surveillance) and DA(decision aids) help the prostate patient as a treatment choice instead of radiation treatment ◦ Cervical Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase screening for cervical cancer among women of Mexican Descent ◦ Epilepsy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing epilepsy by developing a clinic-based decision support system to enhance self management behavior ◦ Texas A & M Health Science Center-Center for Community Health Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Obesity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change eating or increase physical activity during PE or outside of school to reduce childhood obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase calorie burn in children by modifying classrooms to use stand/sit desks

Table 2: Review of Neighboring States Strategies

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myeloma Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Growth Control of Multiple Myeloma ◦ Proteomic Profiling of Multiple Myeloma ◦ Genomics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To understand biology and treatment of multiple Myeloma Osteoblasts and their mesenchymal progenitors in myeloma ▪ Examine interactions between myeloma cells and stem cells/osteoblasts as potential for stem cell therapy ◦ Potentiating natural killer cells anti-myeloma effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To investigate the biology and activity of myeloma patient derived natural killer cells ◦ Psychiatric Research Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Addiction Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methamphetamine Treatment Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Study of medication to prevent relapse ◦ Mental Illness Research ◦ Brain Imaging Research Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neural Mechanisms Mediating a PTSD Treatment Component <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Explore brain function while participating in a treatment session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase passive calorie burn to prevent or reduce obesity ▪ Increase Physical Activity in Communities ◦ Health Disparities Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavioral and Environmental Influence on Obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining interplay between behavioral factors, environmental factors, food choice, and healthful eating in African American, Hispanic and White families ▪ Employing Diabetes Self Management Models <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing two different DSM programs and comparing outcomes in order to evaluate their efficacy for reducing health disparities ◦ Student Wellness Assessment and Advocacy Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive determinants of childhood obesity in rural and urban settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase passive calorie burn to prevent or reduce obesity ▪ Increase Physical Activity in Communities ◦ Health Disparities Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavioral and Environmental Influence on Obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining interplay between behavioral factors, environmental factors, food choice, and healthful eating in African American, Hispanic and White families ▪ Employing Diabetes Self Management Models <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing two different DSM programs and comparing outcomes in order to evaluate their efficacy for reducing health disparities ◦ Student Wellness Assessment and Advocacy Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive determinants of childhood obesity in rural and urban settings ◦ University of Mississippi Medical Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Center for Tobacco Treatment, Education and Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Related to tobacco use and cessation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Genetic & physiological mechanisms ◦ Clinical considerations • Treatment strategies, treatment efficacy, psychological mechanisms, etc) ◦ Public Health Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment program deployment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment efficacy • Cost-effectiveness ◦ Cancer Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tumor Cell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the molecular and Neuroimaging

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Arkansas	Mississippi Texas
<p>Individual Differences in Cognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore how the brain codes individual differences in cognition and personality ● Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breast Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alternative treatments to external radiation therapy ○ Leukemia ○ Melanoma ○ Sarcoma <p>cellular processes that cause cancer and cancer progression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cancer Genetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determine how epigenetic regulation influences cancer initiation, progression, and metastasis ■ Understand how inherited genetic variation influences predisposition to cancer ■ Mutations in genome ○ Cancer Epidemiology Program ○ Molecular Genomics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cancer Drug Discovery ● Minority Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health Disparities ● Obesity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Investigation the relation between obesity to circulating B-type natriuretic peptide concentrations in African Americans ■ Childhood obesity intervention program in rural schools and affects on students ● Stroke Center 	