

For Immediate Release

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Lincoln Health Foundation Forms Community Health Plan Advisory Board

Lincoln Health Foundation formed a Community Health Plan Advisory Board. The advisory board was formed in response to the recent community health assessment of the residents of Lincoln Parish and is composed of Foundation Board members and selected members of the community. Advisory board members from the community at large include Sonja Cardwell, Lincoln Parish School nurse; Dr. Joe Gilmore, pediatric dentist; Willie Hendricks, Mayor of Simsboro; Hazel Hunter, Lincoln Parish Policy Jury; Cathy Judd, Louisiana Extension Service; Dr. David McGehee, pediatrician; Dr. Mary Murimi, Louisiana Tech University nutrition professor; Kathleen Richard, United Way of Lincoln Parish; Doug Sills, Northern Louisiana Medical Center; LaNell Washington, Lincoln Parish Health Unit; and Dr. David Wheeler, Louisiana Methodist Children's Home. Lincoln Health Foundation Board members on the Advisory Board include Dr. Ben Haley, Dr. Allen Herbert, Dr. Shirley Reagan, and Jo Tatum. Dr. Haley is the chairman of the Community Health Plan Advisory Board.

"The community health advisory board will evaluate the results of the Lincoln Parish Community Health Assessment and recommend priority areas for the Lincoln Health Foundation to address" said Dr. Shirley Reagan, Chair of the Lincoln Health Foundation Board of Directors. "The advisory board will also assess and make recommendations regarding the resources that exist, or need to be developed, to successfully address those health issues that are determined by the Lincoln Health Foundation Board of Directors to be priority areas of opportunity," added Dr. Reagan. "Lincoln Health Foundation is gratified that these individuals have agreed to develop the Community Health Plan which is seen as a blueprint for the work of the Foundation. The expertise and perspective of these advisory board members are critical for the development of a successful plan."

The community health assessment identified several areas that are unfavorable for Lincoln Parish residents in comparison to national benchmarks. Primary areas include higher death rates from cancer, diabetes, pneumonia/influenza and strokes, higher infant mortality rates and higher proportion of low-birth weight infants. In addition, several unfavorable areas involving weight, exercise and nutrition were identified, along with challenges experienced by Lincoln Parish children accessing dental care.

The efforts of the advisory board will result in the development of a Community Plan, a plan of action that will enable the Lincoln Health Foundation Board and staff to address the priority areas identified in the Plan and achieve results by establishing relationships and partnerships that can positively impact priority areas, leveraging resources, supplying access to alternative health and wellness options, and promoting health and wellness options that improve quality of life for residents of Lincoln Parish.

The complete Community Health Assessment results are available on Lincoln Health Foundation's website www.lincolnhealth.com.