



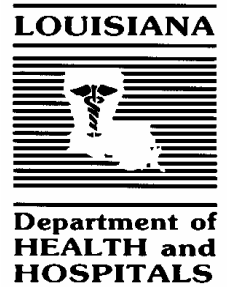
# Reducing the Number of Uninsured Children in Northwest Louisiana

## Northwest La LaCHIP Conference

Shreveport, LA

June 29, 2004

**J. Ruth Kennedy, Medicaid Deputy Director  
Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals**





# Today's Agenda

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- Why We're Here
- Message from Governor's Office
- Overview of Recent Initiatives in Northwest Louisiana
- Panel of Local Health Care Professionals
- Lunch—Overview of Successful Practices in Other Areas of State
- Breakout Sessions
- Wrap Up and Next Steps



# Why We're Here Today

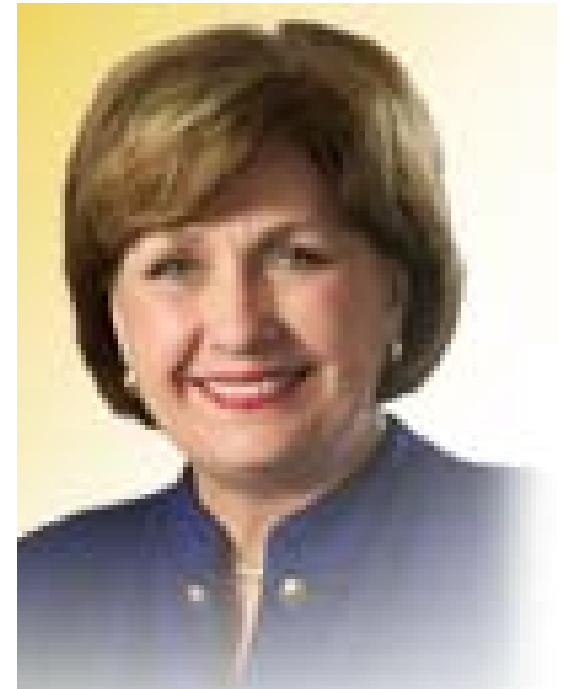
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- Reaffirm DHH commitment to outreach
- Provide data on remaining uninsured children
- Identify reasons for higher rate of uninsured children in northwest LA
- Develop strategies for “hard to reach”
- Improve partnerships with, and empower stakeholders



# Governor Kathleen Blanco's Focus on Health Care

- March 2004 State Health Summit
- **Immediate goal: enroll all eligible children in LaCHIP**
- Creation of Regional Health Consortia
- Governor's Health Care Reform Panel





# LaCHIP Recommendations by “National Expert” on June 24th\*

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- Conduct **aggressive** outreach to enroll remaining uninsured children
- Simplify eligibility and enrollment
- Examine applications and notices and redesign them as necessary
- Develop “express lane eligibility”
- Internet based application process
- Aim higher than 25% reduction in uninsured children!

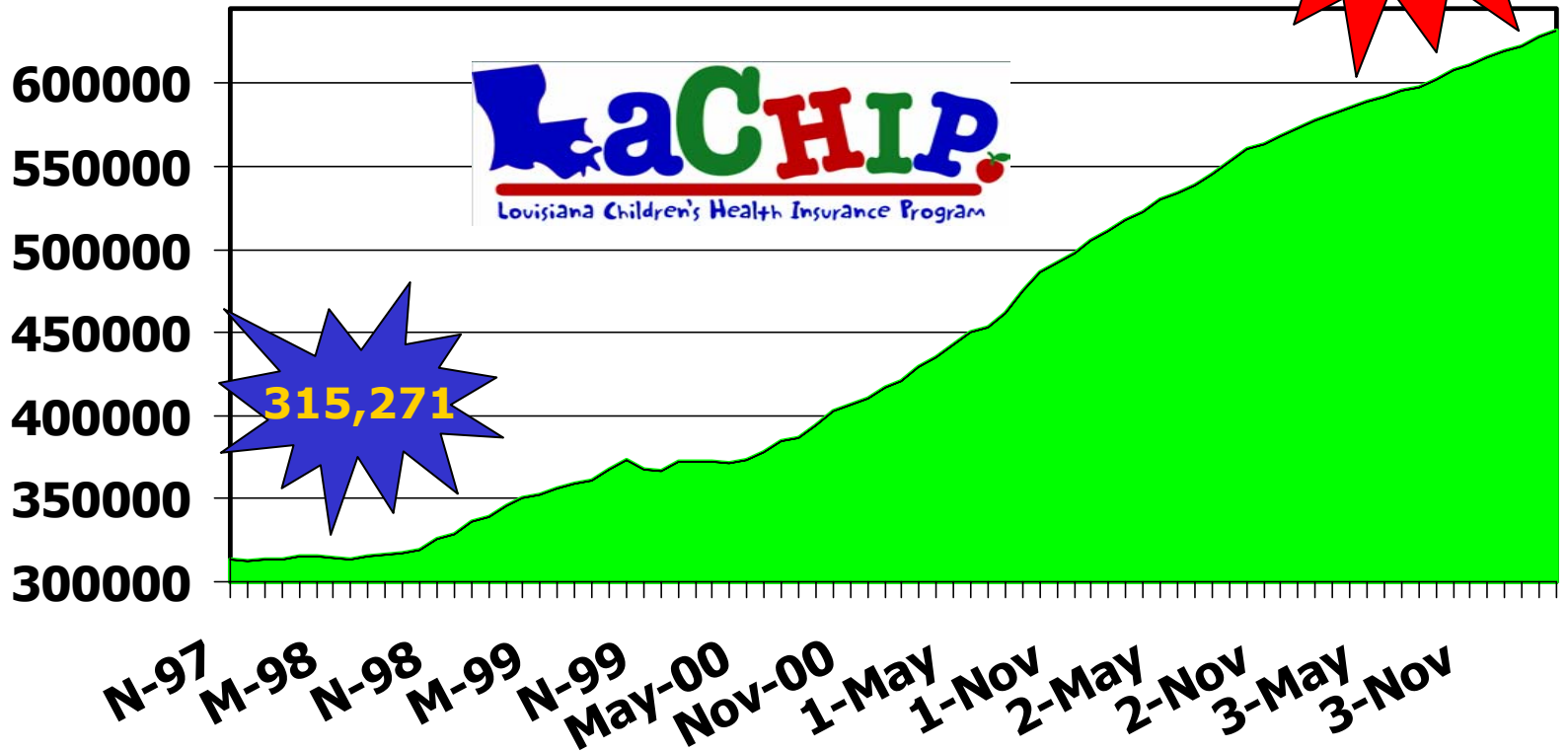
\*Diane Rowland, Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured  
Washington, DC

# DHH Secretary Cerise's Focus on Uninsured Children



- Enrollment of eligible children is immediate objective
- Committed to special, aggressive outreach efforts in NW Louisiana
- Resources to help meet goals
- Facilitate collaboration with natural stakeholders
- Insisting on accountability and measurable results

# Children Enrolled in LaCHIP and Louisiana Medicaid





# 2003 Louisiana Household Insurance Survey

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- Conducted for DHH by LSU Public Policy Research Lab between 5/03 and 9/03
- “Eye-opener for northwest Louisiana parishes
  - Five parishes with 19.3% to 27.2% uninsured, **eligible** children
  - Three parishes with 14.6% to 15.2% uninsured, **eligible** children
  - Only is listed in the “medium” range of 10.6% uninsured, eligible children



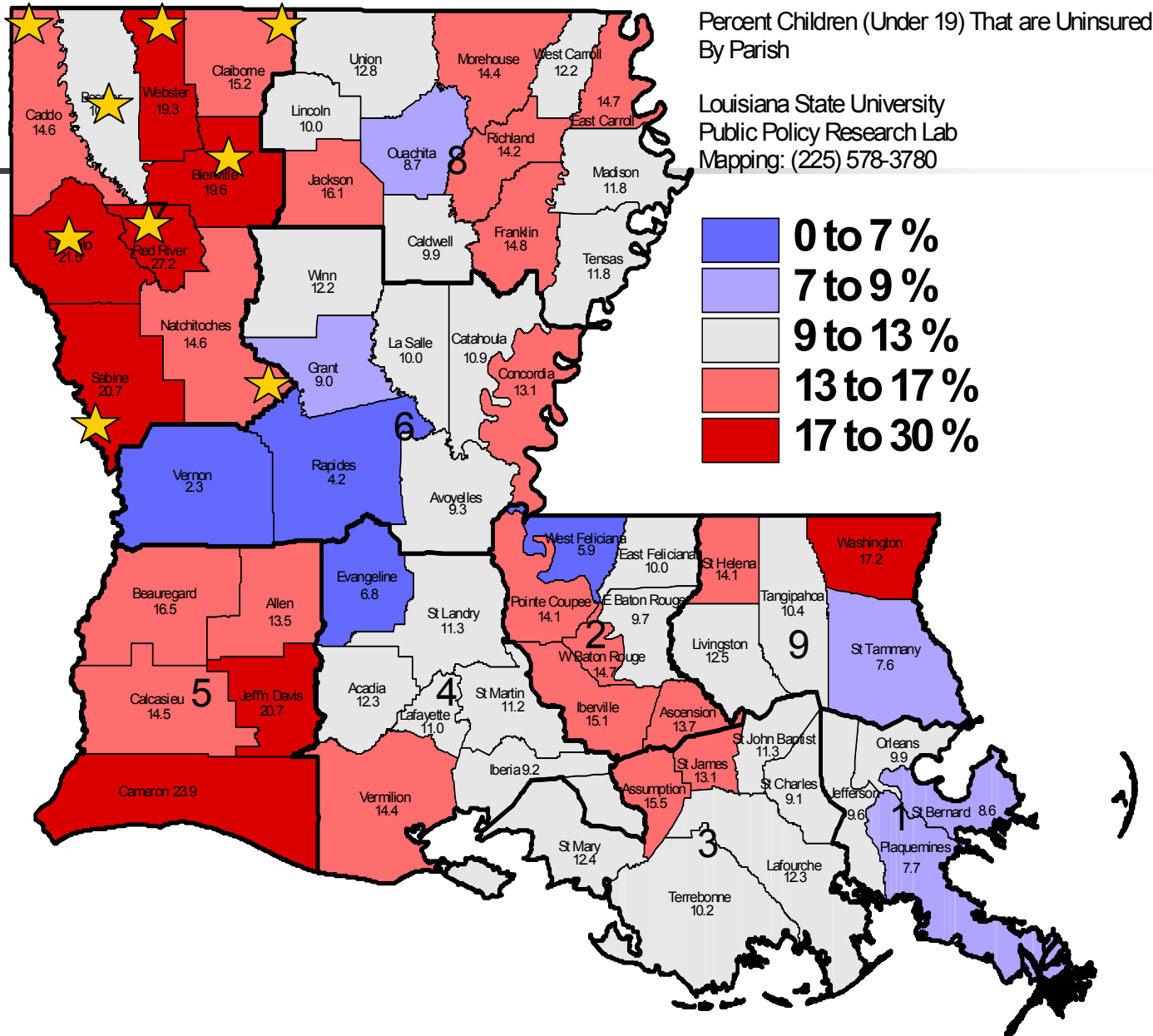


# Louisiana's Uninsured Population in Northwest La

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- 14.6% of Northwest La residents <age 19 are uninsured
- 21,800 total uninsured children in nine parish region
- 23.1% of uninsured NW Louisiana residents under age 19 are under 200% Poverty guidelines
- 17,400 uninsured children eligible for LaCHIP

# Red = The Biggest Opportunities!





# Major Racial Disparities in Northwest La

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- Racial disparities more pronounced in NW Louisiana
  - 11.2% of white children are uninsured
  - 26.8% of African-American children are uninsured
- Only 2 percentage points separate the statewide average



# LaCHIP History 101

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- SCHIP in Louisiana implemented as Medicaid expansion in 11/98
- **Seamless** process for applicants
- No difference between Medicaid & SCHIP
- Same application form
- A “package deal”—simplification for both Title 19 and Title 21



# Simplifications Already Implemented

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- One page application
- 400+ out-stationed application centers
- Mail-in applications
- No face-to-face interview
- Twelve months continuous eligibility

Note: Already had no asset test for children

# Taking Care of the “Hole in the Bucket”

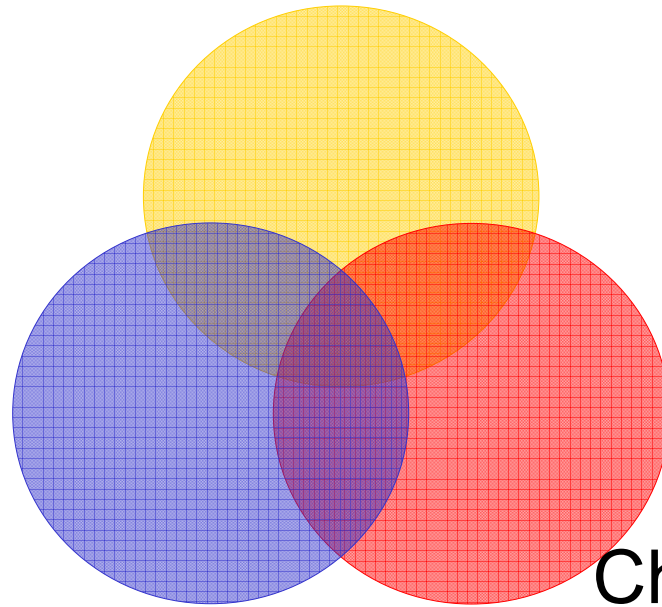


- Focus on keeping **eligible** children enrolled
- Renewal Closures
  - many for “procedural” reasons
  - exceeded the number of “new” children
- Bigger problem for lowest income children

# Three Major Areas of Focus

Identify Eligible Children

Inform  
Families



Enroll  
Children & **Keep**  
Them Enrolled



# Theories (Not Excuses) for High Percentage of Uninsured Children

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- Rural nature of much of the region
- Only two Medicaid eligibility offices serving nine parishes
- High percentage of people  $> 100\%$  of poverty [not technically “poor”]
- High percentage of people  $< 200\%$  of poverty [technically “low income”]



# Some **Myths** that Are (Still) Major Barriers to All Families

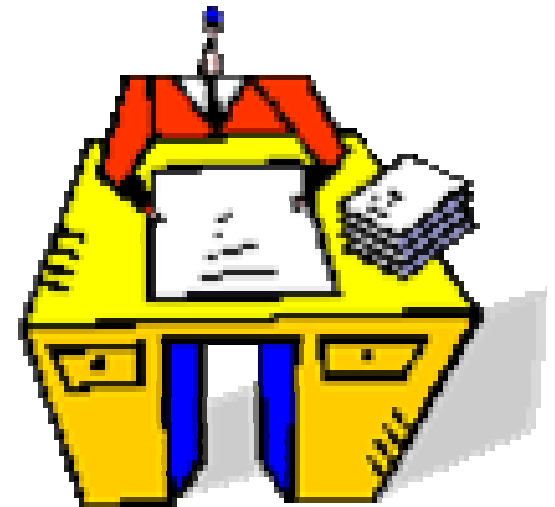


- Thinking that applying is **still** a hassle
- The old “welfare” connection
  - —thinking you must receive cash to get Medicaid
  - --thinking Medicaid is also time limited
  - --thinking father must be absent from the home
- Assuming working people cannot qualify for the program
- Thinking eligibility is determined basically the same was as other programs:
  - School lunch
  - Food Stamps
  - Child Care Assistance

# We've Said "Goodbye" to Onerous Verification Requirements

*"She was one of those "[welfare] oriented workers" last year. I had the hardest time with her with application simplification, because she was one that 'grew up' making the clients verify everything but the air in their tires."*

--Medicaid Analyst Supervisor





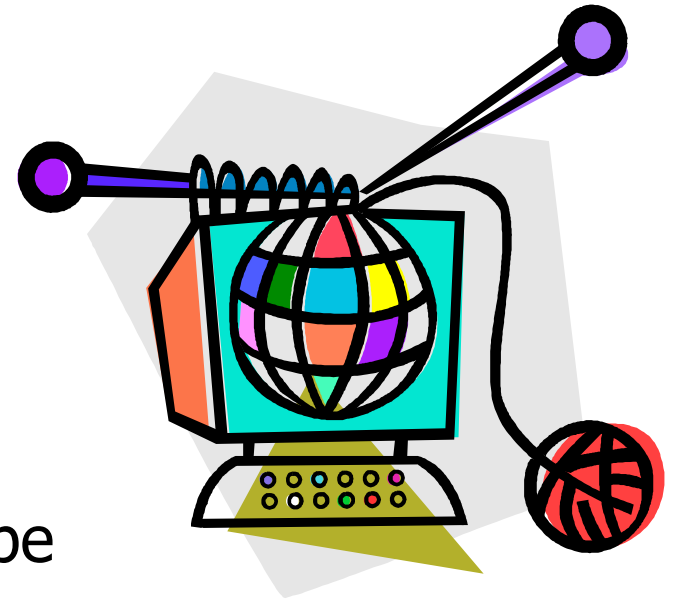
# Statewide Outreach Initiatives

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- Strategic Enrollment Unit established
- Fifth annual “Back to School” enrollment drive in August
- Back to School Media blitz
  - Radio spots—coordinated by DHH
  - Billboards—coordinated by DOE
  - Television spots—coordinated by Covering Kids & Families
  - “Earned media”—coordinated by all

# New LaCHIP Web Site

- New user-friendly name:  
[www.lachip.org](http://www.lachip.org)
- Updated monthly enrollment reports
- Complete results of Uninsured Survey
- Posters & flyers for reproduction
- Application or renewal form can be completed & printed out
- And much more...





# Northwest Louisiana Outreach Initiatives

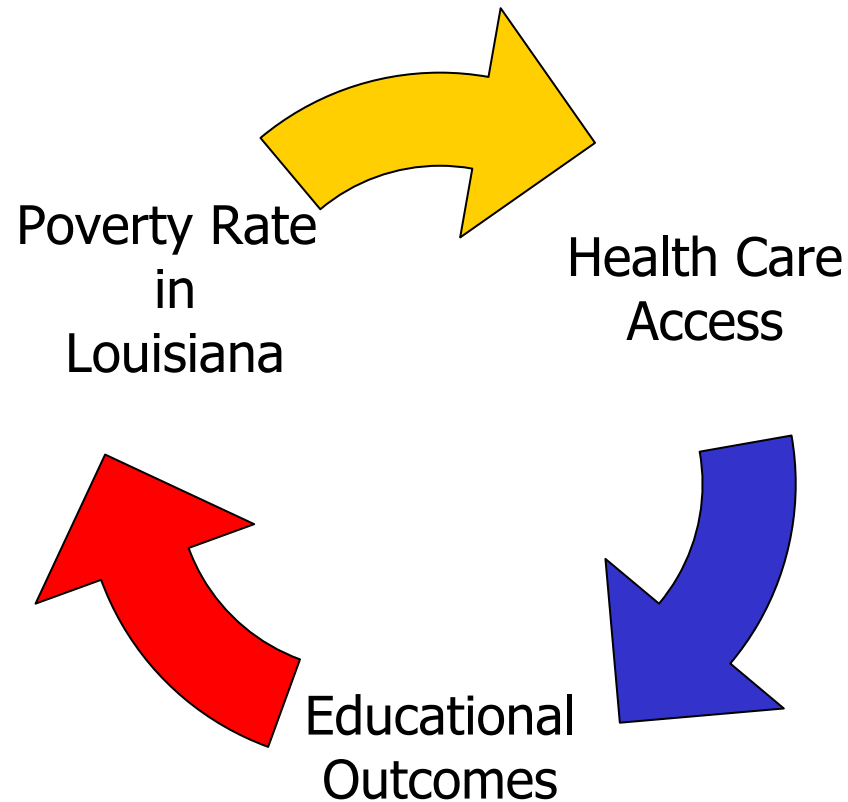
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- Greater focus on the rural parishes
- Dramatic increase in outreach hours beginning January 04
- Out-stationing eligibility workers at OFS offices and public health units
- Expansion of *Covering Kids & Families* efforts in region

# Connecting the Dots . . .

## Why Coverage Matters

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# Public Expectations are High

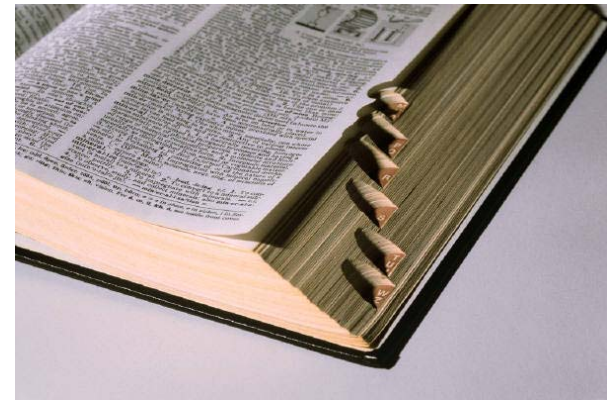
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**The health problems facing this state are serious enough without available resources going unused because the people they are designed to serve do not know how to make those resources work for them. . . .State efforts to increase public awareness about who qualifies . . . must improve.**

*Shreveport Times* Editorial  
April 13, 2004

# “Collaboration”-- The Dictionary Definition

col-lab-o-ra-tion *n.*



To work together, esp. in a joint  
intellectual effort.

--*Webster's University Dictionary*



# Successful Partnerships with Stakeholders

- Mutual respect is a key factor
- Building relationships takes time but is worth the effort
- Local level collaboration is important



# It's Still Important to Inform Families in 2004 & Beyond!

**“Children will not be helped if we don't **intervene**. Parents are either **unconcerned** or **unaware**.”**



--LA Congressman Rodney Alexander at  
10/98 LaCHIP Press Conference

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, caring people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has!* —Margaret Mead

Ruth Kennedy  
Medicaid Deputy Director  
Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals  
P.O. Box 91030  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9030  
Telephone: 225 342 3032  
Fax: 225 342 9508  
E-Mail: [rkennedy @ dhh.la.gov](mailto:rkennedy@dhh.la.gov)

