Hospitals Face Economic Distress

According to the LHA 2010 Annual Survey of hospitals in Louisiana:

- 75% of hospitals have experienced a decrease in the amount of recoverable patient collections from individuals who are unable to pay their out of pocket healthcare costs.
- 48% of hospitals have experienced a decrease in volume for elective procedures.
- 61% of hospitals have experienced increased emergency room visits for uninsured patients, and 56% of hospitals have experienced increased emergency room visits for non-emergent care.

How are hospitals dealing with these economic pressures?

- 9% of hospitals have already closed or reduced services. Another 24% of hospitals are considering closing or reducing services.
- 37% have reduced or changed contributions to employee health plans, and 23% are considering it.
- 20% have instituted a hiring freeze and 24% are considering it.
- 37% have eliminated vacant positions, and 33% are considering it.
- 48% have reduced or put a freeze on capital purchases, and 37% are considering it.
- 75% have reduced non-essential travel, and 37% are considering it or considering making additional reductions.
- 17% have reduced community benefit programs, and 17% are considering it.
- 29% have halted construction projects, equipment purchases or other projects, and 25% are considering it.

Rural Hospitals - Cornerstones of Their Communities

The obstacles faced by healthcare providers and patients in rural areas are vastly different than those in urban areas. Economic factors, cultural and social differences, and the sheer isolation of living in remote rural areas all contribute to the struggle of rural Louisianians to lead healthy lives. These challenges are faced by over 25 percent of our state’s population.

Out of 64 parishes in Louisiana, 40 are designated as rural and are Health Professional Shortages Areas (HPSA). There are 112 Acute Care Hospitals in Louisiana, 50 of which are located in rural areas. Of these, 49 hospitals are provided for under the Rural Hospital Preservation Act. These facilities receive funding for uncompensated care for the uninsured, which is crucial to the small and rural hospitals in Louisiana and their communities.