

# @ HEALTH & WELL-BEING ISSUE

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WINTER 2009

FOCUS: ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

## Spreading the Health

### **CMAP** expands across the state

People in the Cenla Medication Access Program (CMAP) use words like “blessing” and “life-saving” to describe how it has changed their lives.

CMAP was developed and funded almost eight years ago by The Rapides Foundation. Foundation President and CEO Joe Rosier says the program has served a total of 22,300 people across Central Louisiana since its inception. Currently, CMAP is helping more than 6,000 people get the free prescriptions they so desperately need to maintain their health.

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# Cenla Medication Access Program

## Spreading the Health (continued from page 1)



Rosier is proud of those numbers but notes, "There are still so many people who could benefit from this service and we want to get the word out that it is free and easy to sign up. In these uncertain economic times, the Foundation believes it is even more vital to urge people to tell their family members, friends and neighbors about this life-saving program."

It's a message that can now be sent across the state of Louisiana. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals is partnering with CMAP to expand this medication assistance program to 30 more parishes and even more in the future.

The state describes the program as a "model" and "innovative," and that's why it

is making the commitment to expand the program to other areas in Louisiana.

CMAP has been innovative since it began, always adapting services and striving to reach as many people as possible. The program started with three components; a card system that was mainly used by senior citizens and phased out once Medicare Part D became available, a Patient Assistance Program where CMAP staff work with Central Louisiana physicians to sign up eligible patients for free medications, and support of an outpatient pharmacy at the region's public hospital – Huey P. Long Medical Center's England Airpark Clinic.

While The Rapides Foundation funds the program in nine parishes in Central Louisiana,

### CMAP

#### Primary Parishes

**Allen**  
**Avoyelles**  
**Catahoula**  
**Grant**  
**LaSalle**  
**Natchitoches**  
**Rapides**  
**Vernon**  
**Winn**

### CMAP

#### Extended Parishes

<b>Acadia</b>	<b>Evangeline</b>	<b>Red River</b>
<b>Beauregard</b>	<b>Franklin</b>	<b>Richland</b>
<b>Bienville</b>	<b>Jackson</b>	<b>Sabine</b>
<b>Bossier</b>	<b>Jefferson</b>	<b>St. Bernard</b>
<b>Caldwell</b>	<b>Jefferson Davis</b>	<b>St. Landry</b>
<b>Cameron</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>	<b>St. Tammany</b>
<b>Claiborne</b>	<b>Madison</b>	<b>Tensas</b>
<b>Concordia</b>	<b>Morehouse</b>	<b>Union</b>
<b>DeSoto</b>	<b>Orleans</b>	<b>Webster</b>
<b>East Carroll</b>	<b>Plaquemines</b>	<b>West Carroll</b>

## Cenla Medication Access Program

“We believe through the Foundation’s support and this unique partnership – thousands will be able to get the life-saving medications they so desperately need.”

Joe Rosier, The Rapides Foundation President and CEO



CMAP has worked with the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health under the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals to fund the expansion to reach 30 more parishes.

Gerelda Davis has seen and heard of many medical advancements and trends before beginning her role as Louisiana Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health interim director. But she hadn’t seen anything quite like the venture her Bureau, The Rapides Foundation and state physicians have launched.

And nothing that has had its impact.

Davis considers CMAP historic in nature. So when discussing the program’s expansion from nine-parish Cenla to near-statewide status, she is very optimistic about its potential to impact people’s lives.

“When people are being afforded access to the healthcare they need and you consider that there are now 39 parishes involved and the number of people being served, it’s incredible,” Davis said. “Within Louisiana, nothing like this has been achieved.”

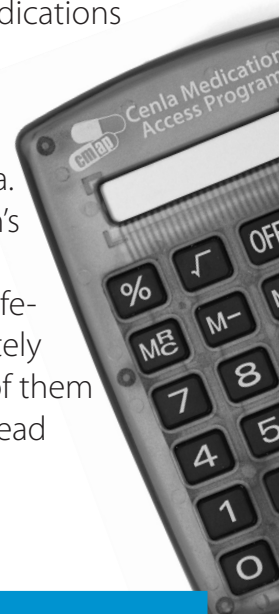
CMAP Program Director Wendy Roy also is excited about its future growth. “We’ve been in Central Louisiana for almost eight years, so the medical community in Cenla is well aware of our mission and how we can help their patients. Now, this expansion will give us the

opportunity to help other uninsured Louisiana residents.”

She is particularly excited that CMAP has significantly reduced the time it takes patients to receive prescriptions. This is possible because of the collaboration involving The Rapides Foundation, the state, and pharmaceutical partners Abbott, Alcon, AstraZeneca, Falcon, Merck, Novartis and Tap.

Where qualifying patients once would wait six-to-eight weeks for life-sustaining medicines, they now wait only a few days. In the past, patients were required to fill out forms to order their medications, beginning an extended process. The partnership allows CMAP to receive medicines in bulk, to eliminate excessive paper work and to get medications to patients faster.

Rosier shares Davis’ and Roy’s excitement about CMAP’s potential to help people throughout Louisiana. “We believe through the Foundation’s support and this unique partnership – thousands will be able to get the life-saving medications they so desperately need.” And for each and every one of them it is also much more, the chance to lead much healthier lives.



## Cenla Medication Access Program

# CMAP:

A 'revelation' to area residents

Lerenda Dausat,  
Avoyelles Parish

Can't afford your prescriptions?

You May Qualify for CMAP

CMAP is now in your area.

Call Toll Free 1-800-749-4

## Cenla Medication Access Program

**L**erenda Dauzat of Avoyelles Parish thinks back to a bleak period six years ago and the problems she had getting the 26 medicines needed to treat her heart condition. It was at that critical time when she first learned about a relatively new program funded by The Rapides Foundation.

"I would have died," Dauzat said. "There is no way I would've been able to afford all that medicine. I neglected myself. It was always, 'Will I eat or take my medicine?'" Then she signed up for CMAP. Dauzat's voice cracks and she becomes emotional discussing the program. "There are no words to express how I feel about what they've done for me."

The 48-year-old Dauzat's appreciation for CMAP is shared by thousands across Central Louisiana who view the program literally as the difference between life and death. The program provides chronic care prescription medications for people who cannot afford them. The CMAP staff works with physicians throughout Central Louisiana to sign up eligible patients for free medications.

These medications truly make a difference in so many lives. Each month many area residents must make difficult decisions – to not completely fill a prescription or to delay the purchase of needed medication so they can pay for items with escalating costs, such as gas or energy bills.

"With the costs of everything going up, including prescription drugs, it can be difficult for the people who need these medications," CMAP Program Director Wendy Roy said. "It gets to where people have to make choices they shouldn't have to make."



**Christie Madden,**  
Allen Parish

Prior to her introduction to CMAP, this was the quandary for Christie Madden. The 52-year-old Allen Parish resident had to make dire choices between medications for her high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. Ongoing issues with getting qualified for disability payments made her need that much greater.

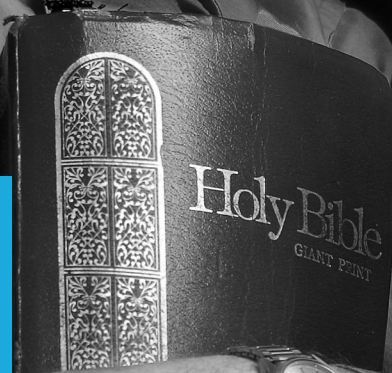
"It's made a tremendous impact," Madden said. "If it wasn't for CMAP and The Rapides Foundation, I don't know how I would have been able to survive. People I know have said they notice a change in me. That's because I feel better. I don't have to think about whether I'll be able to afford my medicine."

## Cenla Medication Access Program

**Michael Crist,**  
Rapides Parish

In Rapides Parish, Pineville resident Michael Crist considers his CMAP experience one that was ordained by a higher power. Crist and his wife were finding it difficult to pay for four different medications for his diabetes, hypertension, high blood pressure and cholesterol on the couple's fixed income.

"This has been a tremendous help and a blessing," Crist said. "We've had three CMAP staff who worked with us, and they've all been very efficient, very helpful. And we've had a very good doctor. We've been blessed." Crist, 63, added, "CMAP's allowed us to have more money for things like food and bills; it's saved my family more than \$400 each month."



## Cenla Medication Access Program

### **CMAP:** A 'revelation'

Having no insurance at all is a daunting situation. When paired with having to take seven to eight medicines a day, it can be downright frightening. For Avoyelles Parish's Anna Moreau, CMAP was a "revelation."

At 63, Moreau and family members were concerned for her life because she had regularly shirked treatment for her high cholesterol and blood pressure. Moreau said the medicines she requires run in the hundreds of dollars. One prescription, for instance, costs \$160 per filling, she said.

"Thank God for CMAP," Moreau said. "With the medicine I need for my high blood pressure and blood sugar, it would really be hard taking care of myself. Before CMAP, I was always worried about how I could get medicine and when I could get it. That's no way to live. Now, I'm living."


Now Moreau is not only able to receive all her medicines but also routine check-up calls from CMAP staff to ensure her well-being.

Like Moreau, other CMAP patients appreciate the diligence of the health professionals who regularly contact them to ensure they are well, their services have been provided and that there are no current needs that have gone unmet.

It is that blend of humanity and professionalism that have endeared the patients not only to the program itself, but to those who make it work. With the continued backing of The Rapides Foundation and its important partners, the program will keep flourishing. As will the people who swear by the real difference it makes in their lives and also the lives of their loved ones and families who care about them.



Anna Moreau,  
Avoyelles Parish

For Dauzat, who estimates her monthly medical bills would total more than \$500, she believes her every breath is owed to CMAP and The Rapides Foundation. "Emotionally and physically, my life has changed for the better," she said. "When you don't constantly have your health on your mind and whether or not you can get what you need just to make it – I can't tell you what a difference that makes." 



## Cancer Screening Project



**Harold Wold, M.D.,**  
*Oncologist and  
Foundation Board member*



# Cancer Screening Project

increases access to life-saving exams

THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION



CANCER  
SCREENING  
PROJECT

**I**n a perfect world, adults would view getting routine cancer screenings as they would celebrating a birthday or major holiday. This is the world envisioned by Christy Frederic, program officer of The Rapides Foundation.

Frederic and others within the halls of The Rapides Foundation realize it will take a lot of effort to make that vision a reality. For the Foundation the work is through the new Cancer Screening Project. It's focused on getting more people in Central Louisiana screened for dangerous cancers that are taking too many lives.

A major focus of The Rapides Foundation is healthcare access. While the CMAP

program provides people with much-needed medication (see stories Page 1 and 4), the new Cancer Screening Project will help them get life-saving screenings.

The Foundation is focusing on three specific areas that if conquered could only enhance the impact of the program on the lives of area residents. Frederic points to research indicating that colorectal examinations for Avoyelles Parish men and women, Pap tests for LaSalle Parish women and breast exams for African-Americans in Winn Parish are in special need of attention. "We've noticed not as many people being screened from low income or rural backgrounds," Frederic said.

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## Cancer Screening Project

### Cancer Screenings (continued from page 9)

**“It comes down to a couple of different things. We have to educate people on the importance of cancer screenings and make sure we have the screening mechanisms in place to meet what we hope will be an increased demand for those services.”**

**Christy Frederic,**  
The Rapides Foundation Program Officer

The project will focus on increasing access and visits to screening facilities, as well as ensuring follow-up visits, and being able to act upon whatever results stem from those visits. The follow through is heavily emphasized by Frederic as a means to guarantee those making the effort to be screened will continue to do so.

“It is very important we inform everyone of the importance of screening. Most people don’t think ‘I’ve got to get my screening,’ but they should. We place importance on birthdays or anniversaries, but not on this. We would like screenings to become as natural as those other things we never forget to do.”

Frederic acknowledges the task of changing mindsets could be daunting if one

approached it on the whole, and not as a step-by-step process built on dialogue and partnership between The Rapides Foundation and the medical community. Frederic has been impressed with the cooperation and enthusiasm of area physicians about the project.

Dr. Harold Wold, an oncologist and Foundation Board member, believes efforts such as The Rapides Foundation’s Cancer Screening Project are critical to increase awareness about the importance of regular screenings. “This is great because it is so important to educate people that these tests are not dangerous, not painful,” Wold said.

According to Wold, women of average probability of cancer should begin receiving mammograms at age 40, and make the habit a yearly one. Women should also begin getting routine breast examinations by their doctors beginning in their 20s or 30s.

Colon cancer screenings should begin at 50, with those having family histories starting even earlier. For cervical cancer, Pap smears should begin either at 21 or when a female becomes sexually active.

Of more concern are people who live in extremely rural areas or from lower-income backgrounds. In the past there has been reluctance by some people who might not recognize the importance of screenings.

One example of the effort to close these gaps is The Rapides Foundation’s plan to implement an evidence-based model for educating African-American women about modifiable health risk factors.

“It comes down to a couple of different things,” Frederic said. “We have to educate people on the importance of cancer screenings and make sure we have the screening mechanisms in place to meet what we hope will be an increased demand for those services.”

## Cancer Screening Project



As with many things medical, the reasons some in the community do not seek regular screenings have been with us for decades. More often than not, Wold said, the hang-ups are mental. "The thing I hear a lot is, 'If I don't know about it, I don't have to worry about it,'" Wold said. "But just because you're not worried about it, doesn't mean you can't get cancer. Others say, 'If it's my time, it's my time. I won't do anything about it.' That's nonsense because they clearly want to do something once they're actually faced with the real problem."

The long-held belief that men are less likely to get screened than women is true, Wold said. It is even more so when it comes to cancer screenings given the sensitive nature of rectal examinations. "Most individuals when approached about screenings will have them done," Wold said. "Once they're shown it is really not so painful and maybe just a little uncomfortable, they have it done."

Wold believes the Foundation's approach which is focused on making more facilities available and taking screenings to the people through mobile vans is vitally important.

"Once people get checked there's the sense of relief that this is something you don't


have to worry about," Wold said. "Also, if you're getting regularly checked, any problems stemming from blood pressure or blood sugar or other potential issues are detected. These things can be taken care of sooner than later."

Wold has a message for anyone leaning toward making the choice that saves lives.

"If you get the screening tests done, you have a greater chance of living

a healthy, productive life," Wold said. "If something pops up, you'll find out before the late stages. This is very important."



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION  
 **CANCER SCREENING PROJECT**

### When to have Cancer Screenings

<b>Mammograms</b>	<b>Age 40*</b>
<b>Breast exams</b>	<b>Age 20-30*</b>
<b>Colon cancer screen</b>	<b>Age 50*</b>
<b>Pap smears</b>	<b>Age 21*</b>

\* These are only guidelines. Contact your doctor to see when you should get screened.

[www.cmaprx.org](http://www.cmaprx.org)



**NEW!**

## CMAP Extra Prescription Savings Program

▶ An Innovative Pharmacy Program that can help you.

CMAP Extra is a program that helps lower your family's medication costs. Participation is provided to you at no monthly cost. By using it you can save money on prescription medications, including name brand and generic drugs at more than 33,000 pharmacies in the national network, including most major chain pharmacies. This benefit is available to everyone regardless of age or income. You qualify if you have current coverage.

### CMAP Extra: Prescription Savings Program Benefits:

The program is designed to assist those without insurance or prescription benefits, but it can also be useful to individuals who have exceeded their policy limits, have high deductibles or who need non-covered medications.

#### CMAP Extra Prescription Savings Program Benefits:

- ▶ No cost to register; no monthly membership fees for participants.
- ▶ Citizenship or residency is not required.
- ▶ The card does not expire.
- ▶ No limit on the number of prescriptions per year.



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