

**Louisiana Primary Care Association, Inc.**  
503 Colonial Drive  
Post Office Box 966  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0966



For more information, contact:

**Raegan A. Carter**  
Director of Health Policy & Governmental Affairs  
(225) 927-7662, ext. 211  
rcarter@lpca.net

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## **Shining Beacons of Hope: Louisiana's Community Health Centers Celebrate National Health Center Week**

Throughout the week of August 8-14, the Louisiana Primary Care Association and Louisiana's Community Health Centers join partners across the country to celebrate National Health Center Week. This annual week of recognition shines a spotlight on the federal Health Center Program and raises awareness of the many ways in which Federally Qualified Health Centers expand access to healthcare and improve health outcomes in communities across our nation.

While we typically take this opportunity to share some of the latest facts and figures concerning Louisiana's Community Health Centers, this year's National Health Center Week takes on a new and more profound meaning. Due to lagging vaccination rates and the highly contagious Delta variant strain of COVID-19, Louisiana is currently in crisis. New cases and hospitalizations are at record highs. Louisiana's healthcare workforce is stretched thin and exhausted.

**Despite it all, Louisiana's Community Health Centers stand tall as bright, shining beacons of hope.**

Walk into any Community Health Center across our state and you will see the beauty of the human spirit on full display. The men and women working in our Community Health Centers are true Louisianans – passionate, kind, adaptable, innovative and resilient. They remind us that no matter what challenges come our way, they will always stand ready to respond and ensure the safety and health of their communities.

From the very beginning of this pandemic, Community Health Centers have served on the frontlines of this emergency – often risking their own health and safety in order to serve patients. Health centers quickly adopted new policies and procedures, rearranged workflow processes, leveraged their experience with telehealth technology and made it their mission to combat public health misinformation.

As Louisiana looks to increase COVID-19 vaccinations, Community Health Centers have proven themselves as go-to, trusted leaders for many of our underserved and vulnerable residents. In fact, since the initial vaccine rollout, health centers have administered over 117,000 vaccine doses. Health centers are effective at employing on-the-ground, grassroots strategies to reach people who are most reluctant to get vaccinated.

**Louisiana's Community Health Centers have a long and accomplished history. They have never been more important than they are now.**

When national and local media coverage focuses solely on our state's hardships - the challenges and suffering that is so widespread - remember to keep our Community Health Centers in mind. Remain hopeful. Remember that our doctors, nurses, clinical personnel and administrative staff members are some of the best in the business. Under their leadership and through their dedication, we know that we will come out of this crisis stronger and even more committed to a healthier future for our state.

We wish our members a happy National Health Center Week. Thank you for making us so proud!

**About the Louisiana Primary Care Association**

The Louisiana Primary Care Association (LPCA) represents 39 federally funded, private, non-profit and public Community Health Centers (and 3 Look-Alikes) across Louisiana that serve over 465,000 patients annually. LPCA promotes community-based health services through advocacy, education, and collaboration with community partners. Our goal is to ensure that every Louisianan has access to affordable, quality, primary care services. For more information, visit [www.LPCA.net](http://www.LPCA.net).