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LPCA Statement on Hurricane Laura Recovery & Relief Efforts

Last week, the most powerful hurricane to ever make landfall in Louisiana tore a path of destruction through our state. With 150 mph winds, Hurricane Laura slammed into Cameron Parish, devastated the city of Lake Charles, and caused havoc to communities across the heart of our state all the way to the Arkansas border. Today, thousands of our citizens are suffering and are left literally picking up the pieces of their shattered homes and businesses. Tragically, 15 people have now died during storm cleanup and recovery efforts.

Here at the Louisiana Primary Care Association and on behalf of our 39 Community Health Center members, we offer our most sincere and heartfelt prayers to families across our state who are suffering following the destruction of Hurricane Laura. As we move past the 15 year anniversaries of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (storms which we have still yet to fully recover from), here we are again in the wake of another disaster. It may take weeks or even months to fully restore access to electrical power and water to some of the hardest hit areas. For Lake Charles and communities across Southwest Louisiana, a recovery from destruction of this magnitude could take years.

Louisiana's Community Health Centers, their employees, and patients have not been spared. From Lake Charles to Ruston, several health centers sustained heavy wind damage. At least two dozen health centers across Southwest, Central, and North Louisiana lost electrical power and were forced to close. Many are largely inaccessible due to fallen power lines and trees, making roads all but impassable. We are continuing to work with our members to complete a comprehensive assessment of the damage.

Despite the difficult circumstances, Louisiana's Community Health Centers have again stepped up to serve their communities in need. Those that are able have reopened quickly to provide services to patients. Many are now involved in hurricane relief efforts, food and water distribution, and are working to get both their employees and patients access to recovery resources. Health centers are reopening and restarting COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. They understand that the persistent threat of this deadly virus still remains and that it can spread even more widely as evacuees come and go from their damaged properties.

We are deeply moved by so many people who have expressed their concern and have offered their help. We have been contacted by state and national partners. We maintain ongoing communication with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), and other Primary Care Associations across the country.

Hurricane Laura, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and our nation's economic recession, have made this an exceptionally difficult year – to say the least. The people of Louisiana are being confronted with a series of crises. Communities across our state are suffering.

Despite so much that has happened this year, we just keep moving. The people of Louisiana are strong, kind, compassionate, and utterly resilient. We help each other in times of need. We are also grateful for the thousands of relief workers who have traveled from all over the country (even as far away as Canada) to help our communities in their recovery. It will be an arduous journey, but we have no doubt that Southwest Louisiana and communities all across our state will emerge stronger than ever.

If you have the ability to do so, please consider supporting any of the reputable groups listed below. As new information and fundraising opportunities come to our attention, we will continue to share these items with our network.

[SWLA Center for Health Services Hurricane Relief](#)

[United Way of Southwest Louisiana](#)

[Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana](#)

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 444,000 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.