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SENATOR HEITMEIER MOVES TO GENERATE MORE DOLLARS
FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

EFFORT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

District 7 State Senator David Heitmeier (D-Algiers) wants to maximize the dollars local governments set aside to provide health care services to citizens in their communities in an effort to improve access to quality health care services across Louisiana. To that end, Sen. Heitmeier pre-filed Senate Bill 51 for consideration at the upcoming Regular Session.

Senate Bill 51 gives the Department of Health and Hospitals the authority to accept funds from local governing bodies for the purpose of enhancing the delivery of health care services to the uninsured and Medicaid patients. The department will develop a system for returning the local dollars and any federal money generated by the intergovernmental transfers to the local governments that choose to participate in the new program. The intent is to use the extra dollars generated through the program to enhance health care services in the communities which contribute to the intergovernmental transfer program.

"More and more our community-based hospitals and health care providers are being asked to take on the responsibility of providing vital health care services to the uninsured and under-insured. And with the current global economic conditions, that responsibility is likely to grow. We must do what we can to ease the financial burdens that go with that responsibility and make sure that our citizens have access to important health care services. That is the focus of Senate Bill 51," Sen. Heitmeier said.

Department of Health and Hospitals Secretary Alan Levine supports the concept. "It is important local governments have the option to enhance health care access in their communities," Secretary Levine said. "We strongly support this legislation because it provides additional revenues for helping local providers serve our state's poor. We applaud Sen. Heitmeier for his hard work in putting this bill together, and we stand ready to work with any parish government willing to participate. It is a thoughtful approach."

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee will consider Senate Bill 51 during the 2009 Regular Session. The regular session begins April 27, 2009.

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