



# Progress Equals Access *for* Louisiana

July 2007

Issue 1

*PEAL is supported by grant funding awarded to LRHA by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy*

## *a bit of PEAL history...*

In 2004, LRHA was awarded a Network Planning Grant by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. The plan put forth identified the need for outreach and education specific to Medicare benefits and services—specifically the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan introduced in January, 2006. The thirty Delta parishes were the primary target to promote this education and outreach; however, very early on in the project, PEAL partners saw the need extended beyond this designated area and expanded its network to encompass most of the rural areas throughout the state of Louisiana.

The initial enrollment period for Medicare Part D began November 15, 2005 and was set to close on May 15, 2006. Due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the enrollment period was extended for a large portion of Louisiana and outreach activities continued through the remainder of the year.

A major component of the plan was to identify those Medicare beneficiaries who were eligible for the “extra help” in paying for their prescriptions once enrolled in Part D. Eligibility for the program relies on income and resource guidelines. PEAL was able to educate beneficiaries of the benefit and assist in the actual application process. The vast amount of those eligible for the program that were not knowledgeable of its existence was quite surprising. It was decided at that point to add guidance on the benefits of the Medicare Savings Program to our efforts.

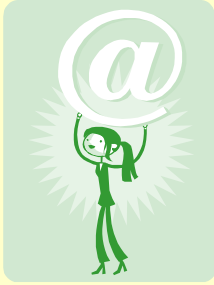
PEAL has been successful in aspects of the plan conceived back in 2004. Outreach activities continue as enrollment in Medicare Part D will open again on November 15, 2007. Events have already been scheduled (see page 2). Call us now to book an educational workshop prior to 11/15 and an actual enrollment event after 11/15.



### **PEAL Partners Meet**

On February 13, 2007, the original PEAL partners along with new faces met at Sullivan's in Baton Rouge to discuss the past endeavors of the project and to plan the next phase of outreach efforts. It was unanimously decided that the “extra help” and Medicare Savings Program eligibility education and application/enrollment assistance should remain the top priority to focus on while conducting workshops throughout

the state. Representatives from the following agencies were in attendance and pledged their support to PEAL for future activities: Assumption Community Hospital and Rural Health Clinic, Louisiana Medicaid, LA Dept. of Insurance Sr. Health Insurance Information Program, Louisiana Hospital Association, and St. Gabriel Eastside Community Health Center. Other agencies who could not attend the meeting but assured their commitment to PEAL are: Area Agencies on Aging, SenioRx, Louisiana Medicare Savings Program, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and Louisiana Healthcare Review. For information on future PEAL partner meetings, please email Erin, [watson@lrha.org](mailto:watson@lrha.org).



## Excellent Resources

The following internet sites have proven to be most helpful when researching, troubleshooting, and planning PEAL sponsored activities.

[Medicare Part D 2008 Outlook](#)

[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

[Louisiana Medicare Savings Program](#)

[Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.](#)

[Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder](#)

[Medicare Rights Center](#)

[Louisiana Answers](#)

## Don't Hesitate! Book a PEAL Event!



Even though there's a lot of time (you would think) before enrollment begins on November 15, 2007—we advise our member facilities to book an event now. The following events have been scheduled... Call LRHA, 985-369-3813 to schedule a workshop at your facility. These workshops are no cost to you. All expenses incurred are that of PEAL. Call us—we'd love to visit you!

11/15/07

Butler-Abshire Clinic

11/16/07

Union General Hospital

Late November

Allen Parish Hospital

12/4/07

Citizens Medical Center



## PEAL on the Web...



The PEAL section of the LRHA website is a great resource for information specific to prescription drug plan benefits and “extra help” eligibility guidelines. All handouts

distributed to workshop attendees can be found on this page and downloaded. These handouts offer details on the benefits of the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, eligibility guidelines for the Low Income Subsidy (“extra help”), and the eligibility guidelines for the Medicare Savings Program. In an attempt to offer this information in an understanding manner, we have simplified the data and present it in a more comprehensible format. Because of the changes every year in Part D, it's difficult for beneficiaries to keep up with what's new, what's changed, and what's coming up in the future. If you would like several copies to distribute in your facility, email Erin, [watson@lrha.org](mailto:watson@lrha.org) and we will duplicate and send to you for your convenience.

## Contact Info

The following numbers come in handy when approached with questions regarding anything-Medicare.

**Louisiana Rural Health Association**

**Phone: (985) 369-3813**

**Louisiana Department of Insurance**

**Senior Health Insurance**

**Information Program (SHIIP)**

**Phone: (800) 259-5301**

**MEDICARE**

**1-800-MEDICARE**

**(1-800-633-4227)**

**Social Security Administration**

**Phone: 1-800-772-1213**