

## 14 La. school-based health programs given grant money

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Fourteen groups that operate school-based health centers in Louisiana have earned a total of \$6 million in federal grants to improve many of those centers.

In early July, the Health Resources and Services Administration awarded \$95 million in competitive federal grants to 278 programs across the country that operate school-based health centers.

Federal financial support for such centers is a feature of the far-reaching 2010 Affordable Care Act.

The awards headed to Louisiana range from \$70,000 to a health-care center in Innis, in northern Pointe Coupee Parish, to \$500,000 for five programs in Louisiana, including the Baton Rouge-based Health Care Centers in Schools.

"I can't tell you how excited I am. We are thrilled," said Sue Catchings, executive director of Health Care Centers in Schools.

Catchings said the grants can be used only for new construction or renovations, or to purchase new furniture or equipment.

Catchings said the grant will pay for renovations to three centers located in schools in the East Baton Rouge Parish school system: Westdale Middle, and Glen Oaks and Istrouma high schools.

Westdale and Istrouma opened in 1987, making them the oldest such centers in Louisiana, Catchings said.

"All three of them will be renovated in the summer (2012)," Catchings said.

The \$500,000 grant will also pay for equipment and furniture for a new center opening in fall at the former Crestworth Middle School, now called Crestworth Learning Academy and operated as a charter school. Catchings said the new stuff should arrive soon after the new school year begins in August.

"We're talking before September gets here and, hopefully, the first week or two of school," Catchings said.

Here are four other organizations receiving this money and located in the greater Baton Rouge and Lafayette areas:

- Iberia Comprehensive Community Health Center, New Iberia, \$462,705.
- Primary Care Providers for a Healthy Feliciana, Clinton, \$500,000.
- Southeast Community Health Systems, Greensburg, \$401,295.
- West Feliciana Parish School District, St. Francisville, \$160,000.

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