

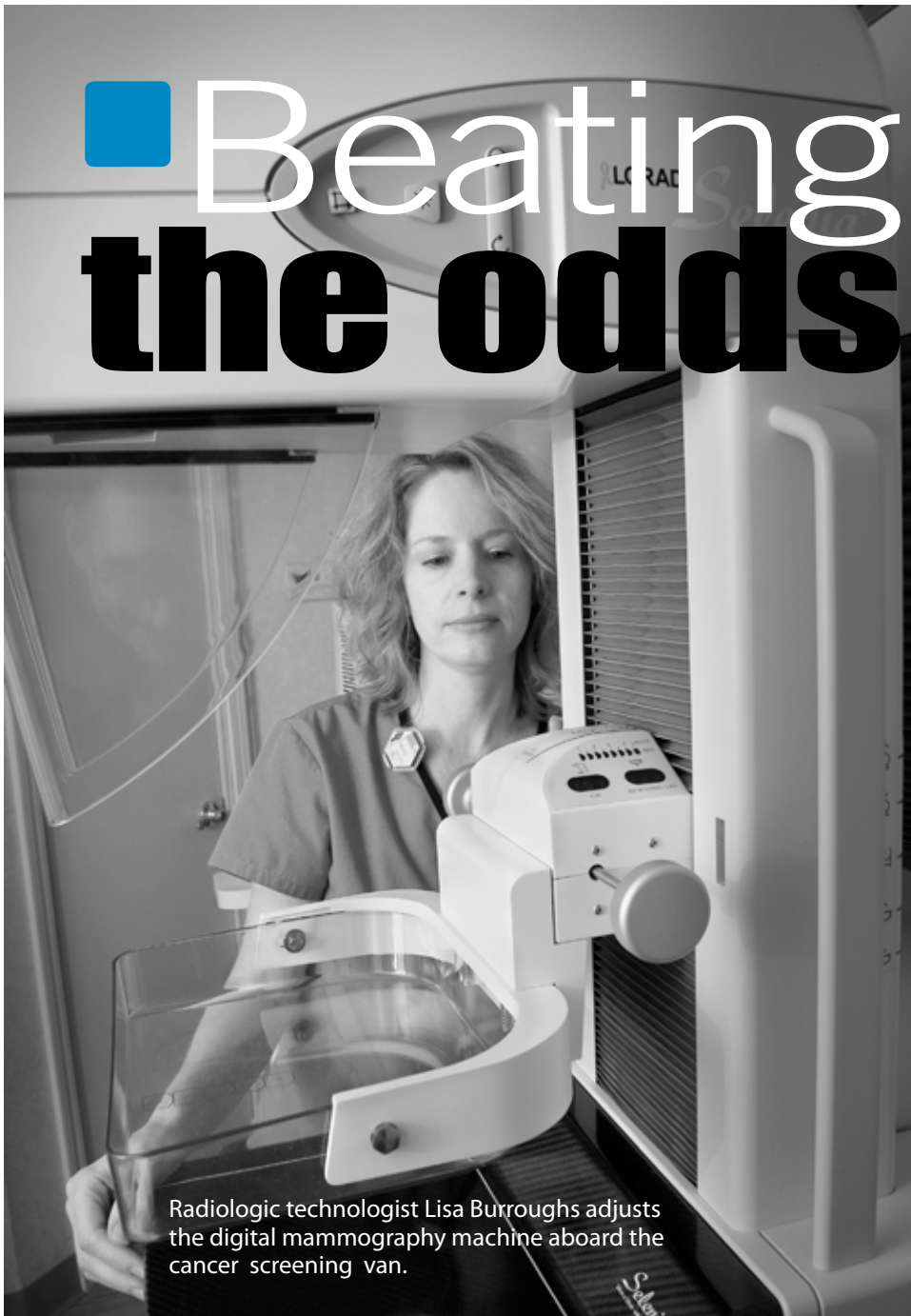
@ HEALTH & WELL-BEING ISSUE

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

SPRING 2010

FOCUS: CANCER SCREENING PROJECT

■ Beating the odds



Radiologic technologist Lisa Burroughs adjusts the digital mammography machine aboard the cancer screening van.

Cancer Screening Project emphasizes routine checkups



In Central Louisiana, the cancer rate is similar to that of the rest of the nation, but the cancer death rate is higher. So why are local residents more likely to die from their cancers? A deeper look reveals the reason.

Central Louisiana has a lower rate of cancer screening than other parts of the state and nation. That means residents aren't getting screened regularly, so their cancers aren't being detected as early. Early detection increases a person's chances of survival.

(continued on page 2)

Beating the odds

■ Beating **the odds** (continued from page 1)



Joe Rosier, president and CEO of The Rapides Foundation, is interviewed at a Cancer Screening Project press conference.

In 2008, The Rapides Foundation developed the Cancer Screening Project to improve cancer screening rates in Central Louisiana parishes. The project, administered under the Foundation's Cenla Medication Access Program, targets breast, cervical and colorectal cancers.

Since the project was started, more than 200 women in Central Louisiana have had free mammograms on a mobile screening van. Others have been able to get long-overdue Pap smears and pelvic exams. In addition, more than 200 women and men have been given take-home kits that check for colorectal cancer.

"We learned that many people, especially those who live in rural areas, weren't getting their cancer checkups for a number of reasons. They didn't have insurance and couldn't afford the tests. They couldn't take the time off from work to go to their doctors. They were afraid of what the tests would show," said Joe Rosier, president and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

The Foundation recognized these obstacles and came up with ways to address each of them, all with the goal of getting more and more people screened.

A partnership with the Feist-Weiller Cancer Center at LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport

Beating the odds



Dr. Heather Guillot (left), assistant professor of clinical family medicine at the LSU Family Medicine Residency in Alexandria, says the project is “making a great impact.”

exams and clinical breast exams on female patients. It also gives the resident physicians additional experience with patients. “This project is making a great impact,” said Dr. Heather Guillot, assistant professor of clinical family medicine at the LSU Family Medicine Residency in Alexandria. Increasing a woman’s accessibility to cancer screenings greatly improves her chances of survival if diagnosed with cancer.

The van makes stops in Central Louisiana parishes four times a month. Appointments are necessary. With so many residents putting off these vital tests, it became apparent that lack of money or health insurance wasn’t the only thing keeping people from getting tested. For that reason, the Cancer Screening Project wants to raise general awareness about the importance of cancer screenings.

“If you have insurance, we urge you to contact your doctor and get these screens scheduled,” Rosier said. “These tests are not as demanding and time-consuming as you think, and they just may save your life.”



allowed the Foundation to take cancer screenings directly to the people – literally – by way of a mobile cancer screening van. The van may look like a motor home on the outside, but inside, it’s a medical clinic where patients can get digital mammograms, Pap smears and pelvic exams. (See page 8 for a look inside the van.)

The van was already being used in North Louisiana. When Dr. Jerry McLarty, director of cancer prevention and control at Feist-Weiller, heard about the Cancer Screening Project, he contacted the Foundation. “We had this vehicle and I was looking for support. It was a good match,” he said. “Screening is the key to saving lives and reducing morbidity to cancer.”

The Foundation in early 2010 formed a partnership with the LSU Family Medicine Residency in Alexandria, which provides the physicians who perform the Pap smears, pelvic

Cancer Screening
**Make it
 a Habit**

Peace of mind

Peace of



Dorothy Buxton,
Vernon Parish

mind:

Annual checkups encouraged for good health



Dorothy Buxton never liked getting a Pap smear. Her first experience years ago was unpleasant, so she's carried that memory with her ever since. She kept up with her regular cancer checkups, but it was always with a bit of hesitation and fear.

When she stepped on the cancer screening van in Leesville recently, everything changed. "The ladies were great. They made me feel welcome. I felt comfortable," she said.

Buxton, 57, got a Pap smear and a mammogram on the van. A week later, she got the call that gave her peace of mind. "All my results came back good."

She had nothing but praise for the women who took care of her. "You couldn't ask for a better crew than that," she said. Employees instantly put her at ease, and even shared a laugh when Buxton revealed she originally thought she was supposed to ride a "little pink bus" to Shreveport to get the tests. When she was told her tests would be performed right there on the van, she was pleasantly surprised. "They didn't waste time," she said.

"The ladies were great. They made me feel welcome."

**Dorothy Buxton,
Vernon Parish**

(continued on page 7)

Peace of mind



Rebecca Villemarette,
Avoyelles Parish

Peace of mind:

(continued from page 5)



Rebecca Villemarette of Bunkie knew she was supposed to start getting yearly mammograms at age 40. But with no health insurance and living on a fixed income with her husband, Villemarette kept putting it off.

She heard about the Cancer Screening Project when her husband picked up a flier at his doctor's office. Villemarette called the number and talked to CMAP Cancer Screening Specialist Trayce Snow. It's a call she will never regret.

As a result, Villemarette, 41, got her first mammogram ever and her first Pap smear and pelvic exam in 15 years, free of charge. "There was no way I could have afforded it," she said. "I just kept putting it off because I just did not have the money to do it."

She thanked the van staff for being "very polite and very patient." Villemarette said she got a small scare when her first mammogram showed a possible problem. She was sent to Shreveport for a follow-up test, which came back with good results. She now plans to stay up to date with her screens. "I am so glad this was available," she said.

"There was no way I could have afforded it."

Rebecca Villemarette,
Avoyelles Parish



Traveling medicine

Traveling medicine:



Cancer screening van visits rural Central Louisiana

When seen from the street, it looks just like any other recreational vehicle traveling the roads in search of adventure. When seen up close, though, it's a mobile medical vehicle traveling the roads in search of cancer. To be more specific, it's in search of people needing to get checked for deadly cancers.

It's the new cancer screening van that The Rapides Foundation brought to Central Louisiana, thanks to a partnership with Feist-Weiller Cancer Center at LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport, Cenla Medication Access Program and LSU Family Medicine Residency in Alexandria.

The van is equipped to bring modern technology to rural areas where people might not have access to these life-saving

Traveling medicine



screenings. It may seem like a rather small clinic to some, but it packs a powerful punch. Within its 10-foot wide, 40-foot long, 13-foot tall frame, it holds a waiting room, an exam room and a mammography suite that includes two dressing rooms for patients.

The van holds a digital mammography machine with computer-aided detection software, a generator, heating and air conditioning and high-speed Internet. But it's more than technology that makes the van so successful.

A radiologic technologist and a medical assistant, together with a physician from the LSU Family Medicine Residency in Alexandria and CMAP Cancer Screening Specialist Trayce Snow, are all responsible for seeing that the patients are taken care of.

"They are the real heroes of this operation," said Jerry McLarty, Director of Cancer Prevention and Control at Feist-Weiller.

The van has been traveling Central Louisiana since September 2009 after first starting to see patients in April 2009 in North Louisiana. In its first seven months in Central Louisiana, 255 patients were seen on the van. It continues to log many more miles in 2010, going to various locations in Cenla four days a month, seeing an average of 15-20 patients a day.

The Cancer Screening Project provides screening for:

- ✓ Women ages 40-64: Pap smear, pelvic exam, clinical breast exam, mammogram
- ✓ Women ages 50-64: All of the above, plus FIT colon screening
- ✓ Men ages 50-64: FIT colon screening

Appointments are necessary. For more information, or to find out when the van will be in your area, call **1.318.767.3027** or toll-free **1.888.443.7494**.

The Foundation has found great partners in Central Louisiana who support the project by allowing the cancer screening van to park in front of their facilities. This lends more space and comfort to patients who have appointments on the van that day.

These partners include Bunkie General Hospital; CMAP office in Oakdale; Avoyelles Parish Health Unit, Marksville; The Galilean Christian Bookstore in Leesville; Winn Parish Medical Center; Outpatient Medical Center Inc, Natchitoches; Northwestern Louisiana Cancer Center, Natchitoches; Rapides Parish Health Unit, Alexandria; Walmart, Alexandria; Medical Office Building, LaSalle General Hospital; Grant Parish Health Unit, Colfax; Allen Parish Hospital, Kinder Hospital Foundation, Kinder.

The van will visit Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn parishes in 2010, providing cancer screening services to individuals who meet age, income and insurance qualifications.



Early detection key to survival

Early detection key to survival



“Mortality rates from cancer in Louisiana are atrocious,” said Dr. Jonathan Glass, director of Feist-Weiller Cancer Center.

“But we can change the outcomes.”

Changing the outcomes, that’s the ultimate goal. But first, The Rapides Foundation knows changing mindsets is critical. People need to know how important it is to get annual screenings for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers and how it increases the odds of survival.

Second, people must know who should get these important tests and when to do so. According to the American Cancer Society, women of average probability of cancer should

begin receiving mammograms at age 40, and make the habit a yearly one. Sadly, though, only 75 percent of women over age 40 in The Rapides Foundation service area have had a mammogram in the past two years. Women also should begin getting routine breast examinations by their doctors beginning in their 20s or 30s.

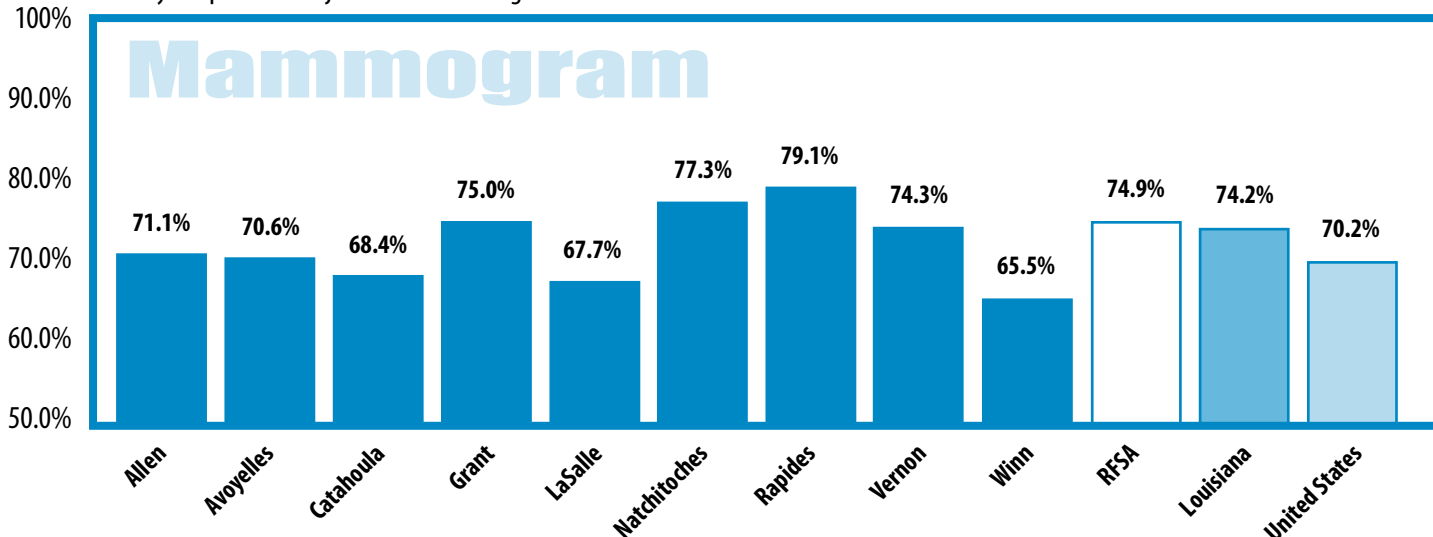
Colon cancer screenings should begin at age 50, with those having family histories starting even earlier. A scary fact is only half of people over 50 years old in Central Louisiana have had a colonoscopy at some point in their lives.

For cervical cancer, women should begin getting Pap smears either at age 21 or within three years of becoming sexually active. Only

Have Had A Mammogram In The Past Two Years

(Among Women Aged 40 and Older by Parish and Age; 2002-2005 Trend Data)

Healthy People 2010 Objective is 70% or higher.



* Source 2005 Community Health Assessment

Early detection key to survival

78 percent of women 18 and older in the Foundation's service area have had a Pap smear within the past three years.

"We strongly encourage everyone to have

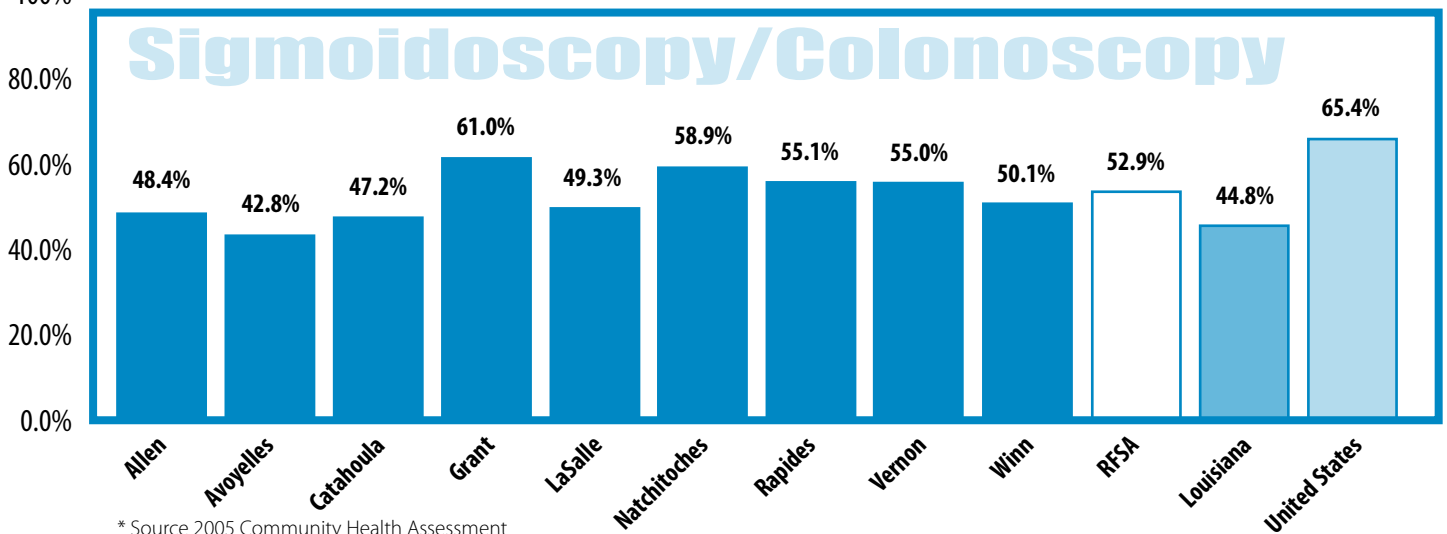
their annual cancer screenings. It's absolutely important," said Joe Rosier, president and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "With early detection and modern medicine, cancer can be treated."



Have Ever Had A Sigmoidoscopy/Colonoscopy Examination

(Among Persons Aged 50 and Older; by Parish and Gender; 2002-2005 Trend Data)

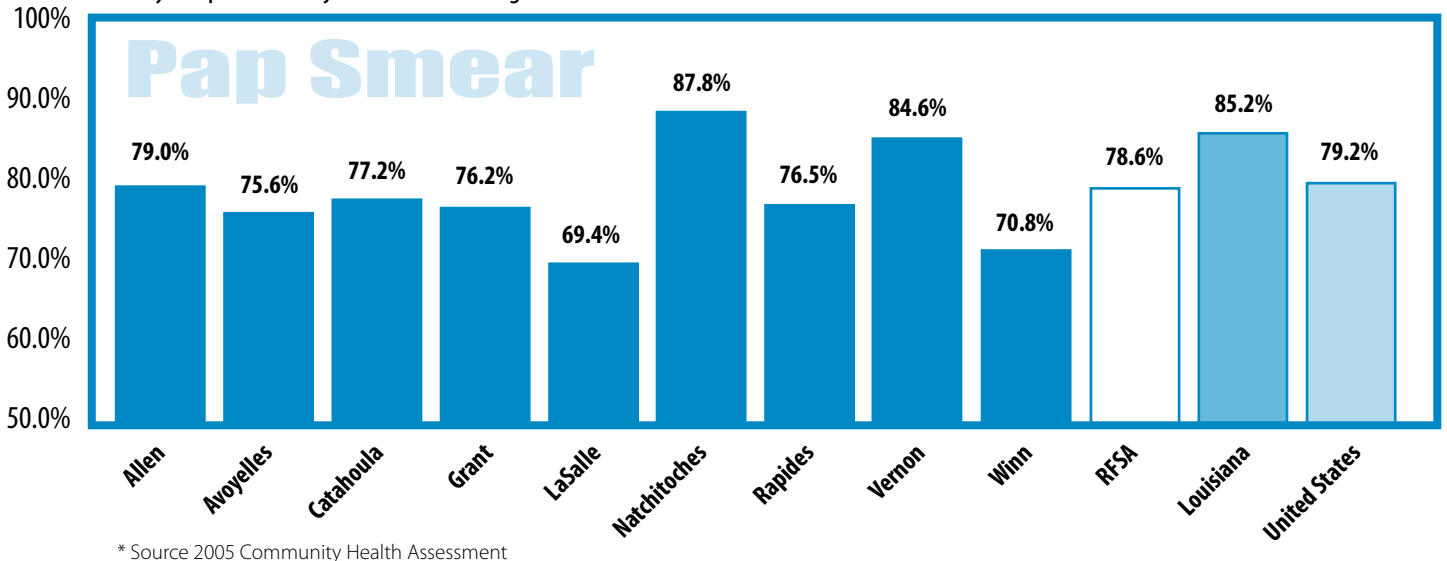
Healthy People 2010 Objective is 50% or higher.



Have Had A Pap Smear Within The Past Three Years

(Among Women Aged 18 and Older; by Parish and Age; 2002-2005 Trend Data)

Healthy People 2010 Objective is 90% or higher.



www.cmaprx.org

Cancer Screening Make it a Habit

Qualifications for free breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings:

You must meet income guidelines.

You must not have Medicaid, Medicare or any other private insurance that covers preventative/wellness checkups.



Women ages 40-64:

Pap smear, pelvic exam, clinical breast exam, mammogram



Women ages 50-64:

All of the above, plus FIT colon screening



Men ages 50-64:

FIT colon screening

Call the Cancer Screening Project today to make your free appointment. 1.318.767.3027 • www.cmaprx.org

Call today to schedule your **FREE** screening.
318-767-3027

Cenla Medication Access Program



CANCER SCREENING PROJECT

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