

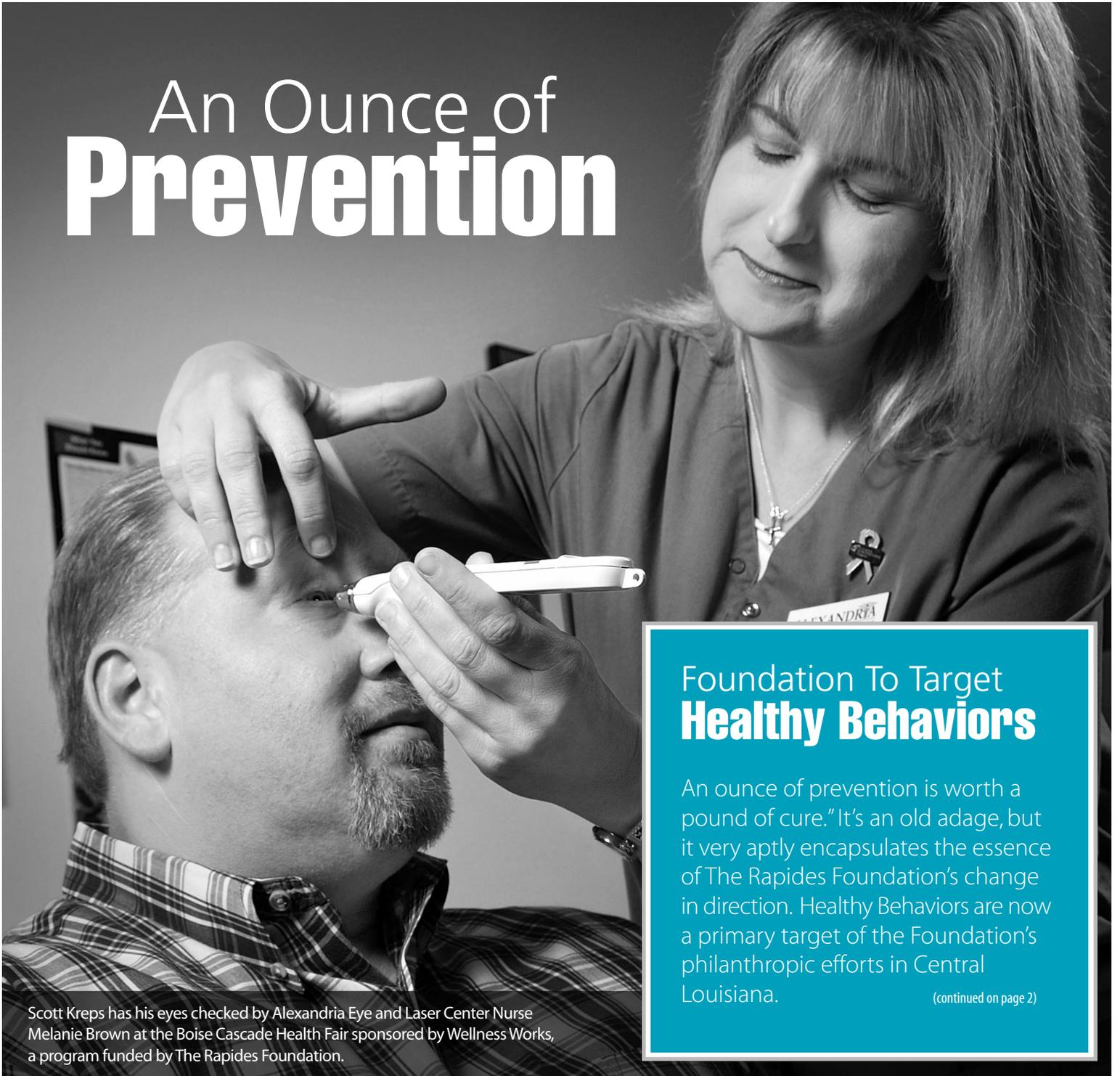
@ HEALTH & WELL-BEING ISSUE

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

FALL 2007

FOCUS: NEW DIRECTION

An Ounce of Prevention



Scott Kreps has his eyes checked by Alexandria Eye and Laser Center Nurse Melanie Brown at the Boise Cascade Health Fair sponsored by Wellness Works, a program funded by The Rapides Foundation.

Foundation To Target Healthy Behaviors

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It's an old adage, but it very aptly encapsulates the essence of The Rapides Foundation's change in direction. Healthy Behaviors are now a primary target of the Foundation's philanthropic efforts in Central Louisiana.

(continued on page 2)

The Foundation's new direction

Prevention

(continued from page 1)

The goal is to try to prevent illness before it occurs. And the plan is to approach this new initiative from three different but connected perspectives: tobacco, diet and physical activity.

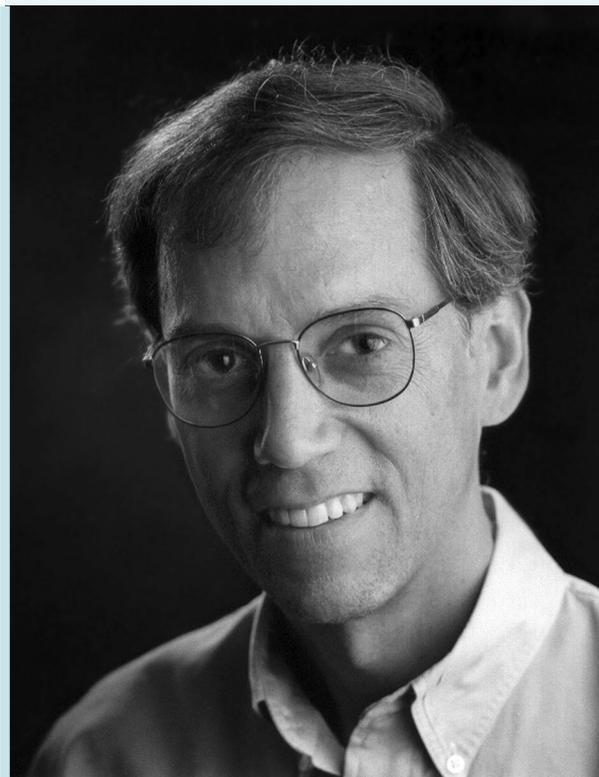
"In the process of charting our new course it became evident that we could make more of an impact if we could be more proactive and try to change behavior," said Dr. Renick Webb, an ear, nose and throat surgeon who sits on the Foundation's Board of Trustees. As a physician on the front lines of healthcare, Dr. Webb knows a little lifestyle change can go a long way. "Just a small change in behavior can make a tremendous difference in the total health of a community."

One of the people guiding the Foundation and its Board into the new direction of healthy behaviors is Tulane professor Tom Farley, MD, MPH. Dr. Farley is chair of the Department of Community Health Sciences at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. He has co-authored a book titled "Prescription for a Healthy Nation" and has done numerous studies and research on a wide range of health issues including obesity and infant mortality. He is currently involved in the "Steps to a Healthier New Orleans" project.

As consultant, Dr. Farley helped the Foundation and Trustees get a clear picture of the health situation in Central Louisiana and how to best impact healthy behaviors. "People in the South, and certainly in the Foundation's region, are among the least healthy in the nation," he said. "The reason is not so much because of lack of access to medical care, but is more related to our behaviors, the things that we do everyday, such as whether you smoke, how much physical activity you get, what your diet is like or what you drink.

"The vast majority of health dollars in this country are not going to changing those behaviors, they're going instead to medical care.

(continued)



Tom Farley, MD, MPH
Tulane professor and Chair of the
Department of Community Health Sciences
at the Tulane University School of
Public Health and Tropical Medicine

“The Rapides Foundation wants to actually improve health rather than to just improve care, so they are focusing on those behaviors. It is a great use of their dollars . . .”

Prevention

(continued)

The Rapides Foundation wants to actually improve health rather than to just improve care, so they are focusing on those behaviors. It is a great use of their dollars because there is really nobody out there in any major way trying to prevent disease from occurring in the first place."

Statistics and studies bear out that modifiable lifestyle behaviors are the leading causes of death. Smoking tops the list. However, poor diet and physical inactivity are not far behind, and with the alarming increase in obesity in this country, both have the potential to overtake tobacco.

Dr. Farley gives an example of how our changing lifestyles have crossed the line into unhealthy behaviors. "When I was in elementary school a Coke bottle was 6-and-a-half ounces. Now a standard soft drink bottle is 20 ounces; it has tripled in size. The difference between those two bottles is about 150 calories. It's been estimated the entire obesity epidemic could be explained by as little as 150 calories a day difference.

"It's not like people are gluttons, it's just that they're taking in a few extra calories per day more than they are expending. So it may be as simple as that extra Coke a day or the size of that bottle."

Dr. Webb said that if people will begin to change their bad habits, their bodies can have amazing regenerative powers. "Your body can take a lot. If you stop abusing your body, it can really get healthy again."

The next step for the Foundation is to decide what programs and strategies it will employ in its quest to help people get healthier. "The great thing about the Foundation is they are very much results-oriented," said Dr. Webb. "That's why we've got this good team of people trying to figure out the right programs to fund and maybe see some social change. I would love to be able to see that."

As far back as the fifth century B.C., the Greek physician and Father of Medicine Hippocrates recognized the need to try to prevent illness before it occurs. "The function of protecting and developing health must rank even above that of restoring it when it is impaired," he said. Centuries later his words ring true louder than ever. We need preventive medicine, and we need it now.

The Rapides Foundation is answering the call. Our lives may depend on it.

"Just a small change in behavior can make a tremendous difference in the total health of a community."

Renick Webb, MD
Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon and
Rapides Foundation Trustee



Foundation initiates new projects

Shifting Our Grantmaking Gears



Rena and Chris Clayton and their daughter Kennedy exercise on a walking trail near Ruby-Wise Elementary School. The Claytons changed their lifestyles after participating in a wellness program at work.

It's no secret that a healthy diet, plenty of exercise and a smoke-free environment can do wonders for your health and well-being. Central Louisiana residents like Novella Coleman are proof of that. By changing her lifestyle, Coleman was able to control her diabetes and face a brighter future. (See Page 11 for full story.)

Is it possible for the rest of us to follow her example? The Rapides Foundation thinks so, which is why we are investing a major portion of our resources in projects that stress healthy behaviors. We want residents to get up and exercise and make healthy food choices. We want smokers to kick the habit and our young people to never pick it up.

(continued)

Foundation initiates new projects

It's a new focus in our grantmaking, which centers on improving the health status of Central Louisiana residents. In previous years, many of our healthcare projects focused on healthcare access – trying to make sure that our residents could get the medical care they so needed. We'll continue doing that through existing programs like our Cenla Medication Access Program, also known as CMAP, which helps the uninsured get prescription medications.

But over the next few years you will see us initiate new projects that focus on healthy behaviors. That said, we have set up some additional funding opportunities and made changes to existing ones.

Our work falls under three priority areas: Healthy People, Education and Healthy Communities. Here's a look at what is happening in each.

Healthy People

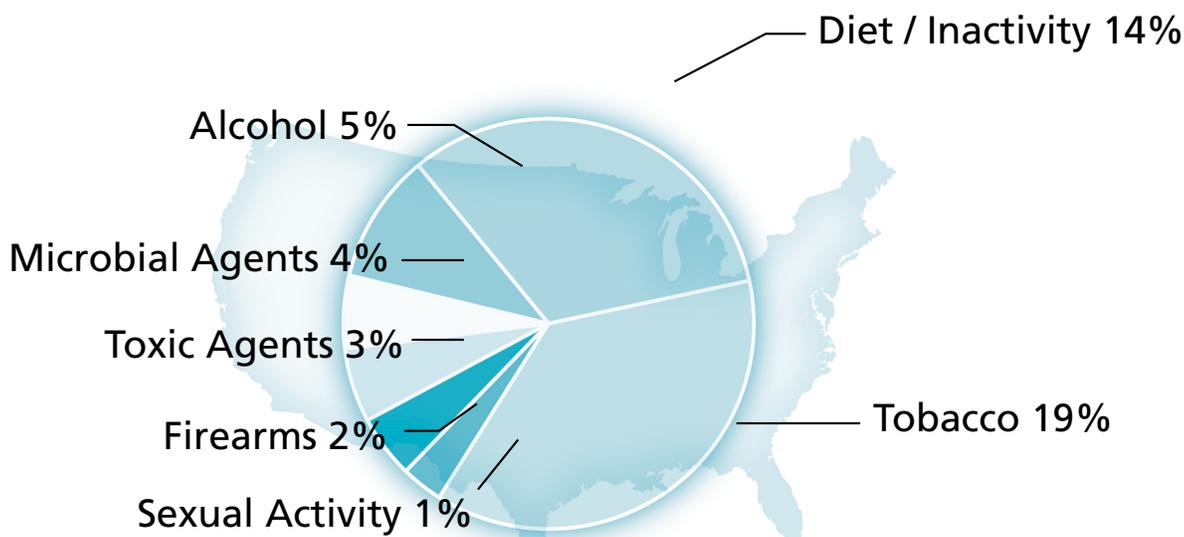
In addition to Foundation-driven projects in the categories of tobacco, physical activity and diet,

The Foundation is investing resources in projects that stress healthy behaviors.

we plan to initiate programs with the goal of helping people get strategically determined cancer screenings and access to primary healthcare and mental health services.

We also will award grants for projects in these categories: teen pregnancy, alcohol use and strategically determined immunizations. These proposals can be in the form of large projects or smaller ones – up to \$10,000 – for pilot programs or technical assistance.

50% of all Premature Deaths are attributed to Lifestyle Behaviors in The United States



Source: 2005 PRC Community Health Assessment

(continued on page 6)

Foundation initiates new projects

Gears

(continued)

Education

The Systemic Initiative is our education effort to provide professional development for educators to improve student achievement in Central Louisiana's nine school districts. We will continue that work which began several years ago. In the coming years we will place an added focus on science and technology.

Healthy Communities

This priority area includes work in economic and workforce development, as well as capacity building through our Community Development Works program, also known as CDW. This program is designed to enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective leaders and organizations. We encourage organizations and residents who need training or access to databases for funding opportunities to contact

CDW at 443-7880 or 800-803-8075, or visit the CDW office located on the first floor of The Rapides Foundation Building. In the near future we plan to announce additional funding opportunities through CDW.

In the area of economic and workforce development, we spearheaded the development of Cenla Advantage Partnership, a nonprofit created with funding from The Rapides Foundation and Central Louisiana business investors. CAP works to help develop Central Louisiana's workforce, raise income levels and be the catalyst for effective, positive relationships among economic development organizations in Central Louisiana.

Another program funded by The Rapides Foundation is The Entrepreneurial League System of Central Louisiana®, which helps local entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

Over the coming years, we plan to initiate even more projects relating to workforce development, business startups and expansion.



Sherman Fookes, General Manager of the Louisiana Athletic Club, helps Justin Shilling use an electronic caliper to test his body fat and body mass index at the Boise Cascade Health Fair.

Central Louisiana We Have A **Problem**

Tobacco use is the number one contributing factor to premature death. Is it any wonder The Rapides Foundation has decided to tackle the major health issue of tobacco in its quest to help the people of Central Louisiana live longer and healthier lives?

(continued on page 8)

Tobacco Use & Premature Death

“Decreasing your smokers in your community is going to bring down healthcare costs, and that affects your insurance rates, it affects your hospital rates, it affects so many things.”

Pamela Redmon, BS, MPH
Managing Director of the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC), a part of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University



Problem

(continued)

Some basic numbers show the need for local intervention. “If you look at smoking prevalence in the United States, 20 percent of the population are smokers. In Louisiana, 23.4 percent of the population smokes. When you take a snapshot of The Rapides Foundation’s service area, you’re up to 24.9 percent. That is about 5 percent more than in the United States at large,” said Pamela Redmon, BS, MPH, Managing Director of the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC), a part of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University.

The Rapides Foundation’s 2005 Community Health Assessment shows that men have the highest prevalence of tobacco use, about 30 percent of the low-income population smokes and that the percentage increases with the very low income population. Twenty-one percent of Central Louisiana adults live in households where at least one member smokes. A total of 8.5 percent of area adults currently use smokeless tobacco, a statistic which is nearly double the national average. What’s more alarming is that this number continues to rise, not fall.

TTAC, a national tobacco control organization, “provides training and technical assistance support to national, state, regional and local organizations or individuals who are working on tobacco control efforts,” said Redmon. The Rapides Foundation contacted TTAC for guidance and counsel in developing an effective plan of action in the face of these alarming statistics.

“The first thing the Foundation had us do is to find out what other groups in The Rapides Foundation service area are doing in terms of tobacco control. We don’t want to duplicate their efforts, but rather form partnerships so that everyone is complementing the other,” said Redmon, praising the Foundation for its analytical approach to the tobacco problem. “They have followed this step by step and have found out where the gaps are. And they are following the science as they plan their program. Everything they do will be based on science and what the research says.”

But whatever programs or projects the Foundation puts into motion, whether aimed at smoking cessation or prevention, both smokers and nonsmokers will benefit in many ways.

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Tobacco Use & Premature Death

Problem

(continued)

"Decreasing your smokers in your community is going to bring down healthcare costs, and that affects your insurance rates, it affects your hospital rates, it affects so many things," said Redmon. "It is also important to know that the smoker does not just affect the individual. Second-hand smoke is dangerous; it's very dangerous."

Dr. Ilyas Chaudhry is on the Board of Trustees of The Rapides Foundation. As a cardiologist, he is well aware that the dangers of smoking extend beyond the smoker. "Not only do smokers hurt themselves, they also hurt others. Second-hand smoke is very unhealthy."

Over the years he has counseled many patients on the dangers of smoking. "You really have to sit down with these people one to one and talk to them and explain what this is doing to their bodies."

Dr. Chaudhry says there are five risk factors for heart disease: family history, cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, and high blood pressure. Unlike diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol, smoking cannot be controlled with medication. "So the only thing you can really do is try to convince people, and point out to them that when they smoke they really increase their risk for heart

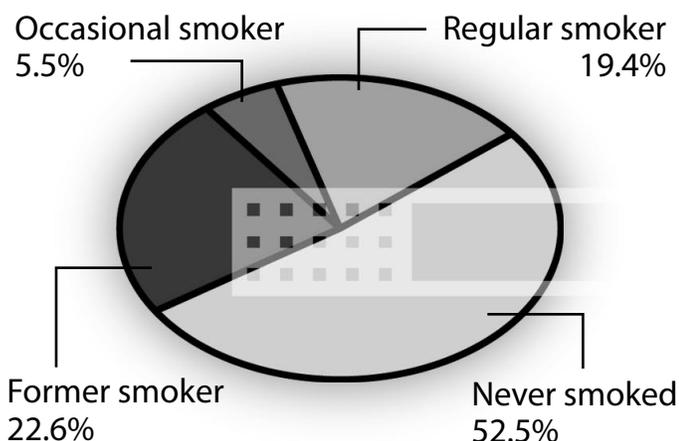
attack several fold, not to mention the risk on the lungs."

As to the risk on the lungs, Redmon has more statistics. "In the United States you have 55 diagnoses of lung cancer per 100,000 people. In Louisiana you have 68. In The Rapides Foundation service area you have 73 diagnoses of lung cancer per 100,000 people. That's just staggering to me." Redmon concluded with, "The number one cause of lung cancer is tobacco use."

The good news is that much of the damage of smoking can be reversed. "It depends on how long someone has smoked and how much they have smoked," Dr. Chaudhry explained. "If somebody has smoked 20, 30, 40 years, some of that damage is permanent. If the younger smoker quits, he could almost be reversed to normal status. The earlier they stop, the bigger the benefit. But the benefit is always there, even if they have smoked all their life."

Through its new tobacco component of the Healthy Behaviors Initiative, The Rapides Foundation will work to bring the area a little closer to going smokeless. The many benefits to the people of Central Louisiana make the commitment well worth it.

One in four Rapides Foundation Service Area adults currently smokes



2005 PRC Community Health Survey

Recipe for a Healthier Cenla



Living in the Land of **Too Much Plenty!**

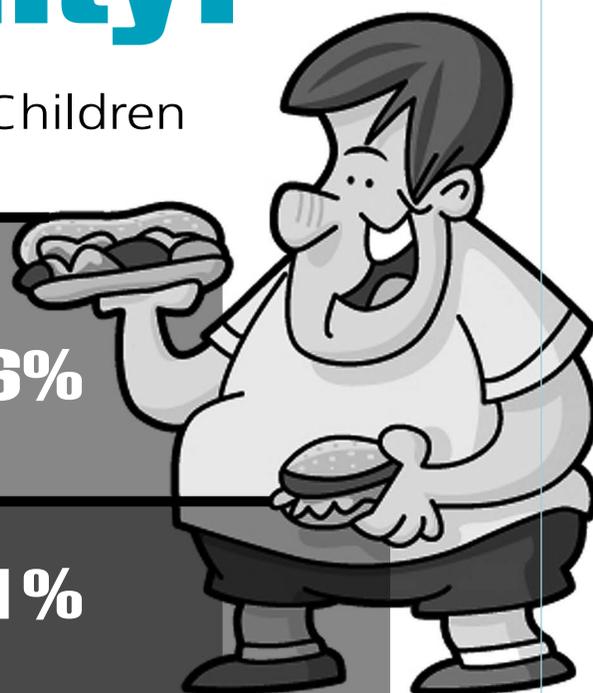
Overweight Children
Ages 6 to 17

The Rapides
Foundation
Service Area

30.6%

United States

14.1%



Source: 2005 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants; 2002-2005 Trend Data

“ ... not only American society in general, but in Louisiana in particular, we’ve got to change our eating habits.”

Bruce Barton, MD
Internal Medicine Physician and
Rapides Foundation Trustee

Food, glorious food! It’s all around us and so very plentiful. Cakes and ice cream, chips and dips, hamburgers and French fries. Mmmmmmmmm. It’s like a gastronomic dream come true, but if you look a little closer it can sometimes seem more like a nightmare.

“We do have access that people historically have never had to all these different types of food, and certainly in the culture that we have locally – food is a big part of our social gatherings. So, not only American society in general, but in Louisiana in particular, we’ve got to change our eating habits,” said internal medicine physician and Rapides Foundation Trustee Bruce Barton, MD.

Fellow Trustee and family practice physician Michael Buck, MD, couldn’t agree more. “People now are having obesity problems because of the availability of food and the amount of inactivity. A long time ago people were not as obese. Things were natural then; there were no highly concentrated processed foods. Now we have

such a large amount of high fat, fried, processed foods that are so available to us all the time at a very cheap price – we are eating ourselves to death to some degree. In fact the obesity epidemic is so high right now that they’re predicting that the children being born right now will not live as long as we are.”

The obesity epidemic and the need for healthier eating are major reasons why The Rapides Foundation selected diet as one of the three components of its Healthy Behaviors Initiative. Our current hurried lifestyle and poor food choices act as triggers to unhealthy eating and obesity.

“People are eating too many carbohydrates,” insists Dr. Buck. “Simple carbohydrates are a lot like sugar. When they’re broken down in the body they go right to sugar and that stimulates the pancreas to secrete insulin immediately, and because the carbohydrate is mainly sugar, the sugar level goes down fairly quickly in the bloodstream. Insulin causes fat deposition and hunger. So, if you eat a lot of carbohydrates or sugars, either one, your insulin is always high and it causes obesity and hunger all the time.”

Dr. Barton agreed. “It’s the lifestyle we lead. We’re all so busy; we run so much. I think sitting down with your family and having that big meal is less a problem than when you don’t have time to eat right. You do the drive-thru window thing and you pick up a burger or whatever, and then fries to go with it and triple-size your drink. I think those things are a bigger problem. We really have got to change some of those behaviors and break some of those really bad habits.”

Novella Coleman is 53 years old, with a husband, four children and six grandchildren. She’s a senior Project Asset Accountant for Cleco and is working on her 23rd year of employment at the utility company. She knows all about breaking bad habits. “I found out I was a Type II diabetic in 2002 and that really called for not just a diet, but a whole lifestyle change.”

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Recipe for a Healthier Cenla

Too Much Plenty!

(continued from page 11)

“I wanted to be around to see my grandchildren grow up, and have quality of life for as long as I can for their sakes.”

Novella Coleman,
Cleco Senior Project Asset Accountant

Coleman said the hardest part was learning to eat by serving size. “If you choose to eat cookies, you can, but only two cookies a serving. If you eat chips, and I don’t keep them in my house, an average serving size is anywhere from 7 to 14 chips, not the whole bag. And you don’t eat the whole pint of ice cream. A regular banana is actually two servings. A red, delicious apple is considered two servings, maybe even three, depending on the size. You just learn to eat the serving size.”

And Coleman learned how to increase her physical activity. “Be conscious of your calories, and add exercise; you gotta burn those calories.” The healthy result for Coleman has been a weight loss of over 50 pounds.

“Oh, I feel wonderful. I feel a whole lot better.” That’s a whole lot better and grateful for a healthier life. “I really wanted to do this. I wanted to be around to see my grandchildren grow up, and have quality of life for as long as I can for their sakes.”

Through its new healthy behaviors program and diet component, The Rapides Foundation will be helping thousands of area residents like Novella Coleman learn about nutritious eating and healthy lifestyles. It’s part of our recipe for a healthier Central Louisiana.



Novella Coleman,
Cleco Senior Project Asset Accountant

Importance of Physical Activity

Pollock Elementary students (l-r) Lance Delrie, Sam Hudgens, Ragan Delrie, Tanner Brazil, and Sydney Leger are shown with parent volunteer Vivian Brazil who helped write the grant for the playground equipment at their school.



Let's Get Moving!

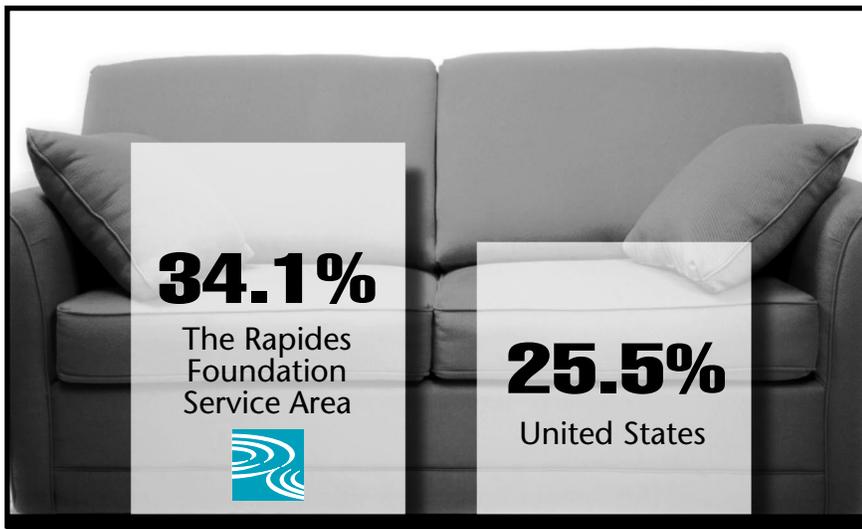
Physical activity is the third component of The Rapides Foundation's Healthy Behaviors Initiative. Our lives are too sedentary, and that, coupled with suspect diet choices are leading to numerous health problems like obesity and heart disease. Our children are facing obesity in epidemic proportions.

A case in point can be found in Grant Parish at Pollock Elementary School, a school with an enrollment of 650 students. "I'm amazed when I walk around the campus and see some of these students who are, I would say, morbidly obese already in the second, third, fourth grade," said Rebecca Reeder, school principal. "You've got these kids who can't even play at recess because they're so large. They get out of breath; they can't participate."

(continued on page 14)

Importance of Physical Activity

No Leisure-Time Activity In The Past Month



- Less favorable than the 25.5% reported across the nation.
- Ranges from 28.6% in Natchitoches to 37.3% in Rapides and Winn Parishes.
- Trend marks a significant increase from the 30.1% reported in 2002.

Based on PRC Community Health Surveys 2002-2005 Trend Data

Moving!

(continued from page 13)

Two years ago the school received a matching grant from The Rapides Foundation for new playground equipment. The school's parent/teacher organization held numerous fundraisers that provided the additional funding. The equipment allows children multiple choices of activities guaranteed to keep them moving, like monkey bars, slides, tunnels, and connecting walkways. "It went along with our wellness policy to have equipment that was safe and offered more activity for the children," said Reeder.

The installment of the equipment was so successful, Reeder says, that, "Frequently, if I come over here in the evening or on weekends, I'll see children playing on it. Families will go over and be playing out there. I've even seen picnic baskets."

The school system of Grant Parish backs up the Pollock Elementary wellness policy. "The parish adopted a wellness policy and we've been trying to implement it slowly. It has an emphasis on healthier, nutritious eating, and more activity and exercise for the children," said Reeder.

On the nutrition side the breakfast and lunch program has been examined with more stringent guidelines set up to provide a proper balance and less fat. Candy is out, except on special occasions, and has been replaced with fresh fruits and healthy snacks. But Reeder says she tries to

be flexible. "I can remember as an elementary school student what I enjoyed, and I try very hard to balance it."

Pollock Elementary also has the distinction of being one of only two schools in the parish with a school-based health center which educates children about healthy eating and exercise, and even provides treatment of some medical problems.

In addition, the school revamped its physical education program. Children now have 15 to 20 minutes of daily exercise, followed by some type of organized sports activity. The school also added more playground equipment like balls and jump ropes.

Physical activity is a must for children as well as adults for a healthier, longer life. Family practice physician, Dr. Michael Buck, also a Rapides Foundation Trustee, said he always recommends an exercise program for his patients. "I recommend a very simple regimen for exercising, and that would be, you've got to at least exercise for 20 to 30 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week. I don't care if that's fast walking or jogging or exercise bike or treadmill; it doesn't matter.

"I tell them to keep it simple. And they need to schedule it, not exercise when they have time. I also tell my patients to exercise first thing in the morning. Get it out of the way when their energy level is better, because at the end of the day when they come home from work it's very hard for them to do their exercise because they're tired."

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Moving!

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Dr. Bruce Barton, an Internist and Foundation Trustee, believes the benefits for a consistent program of physical activity are many:

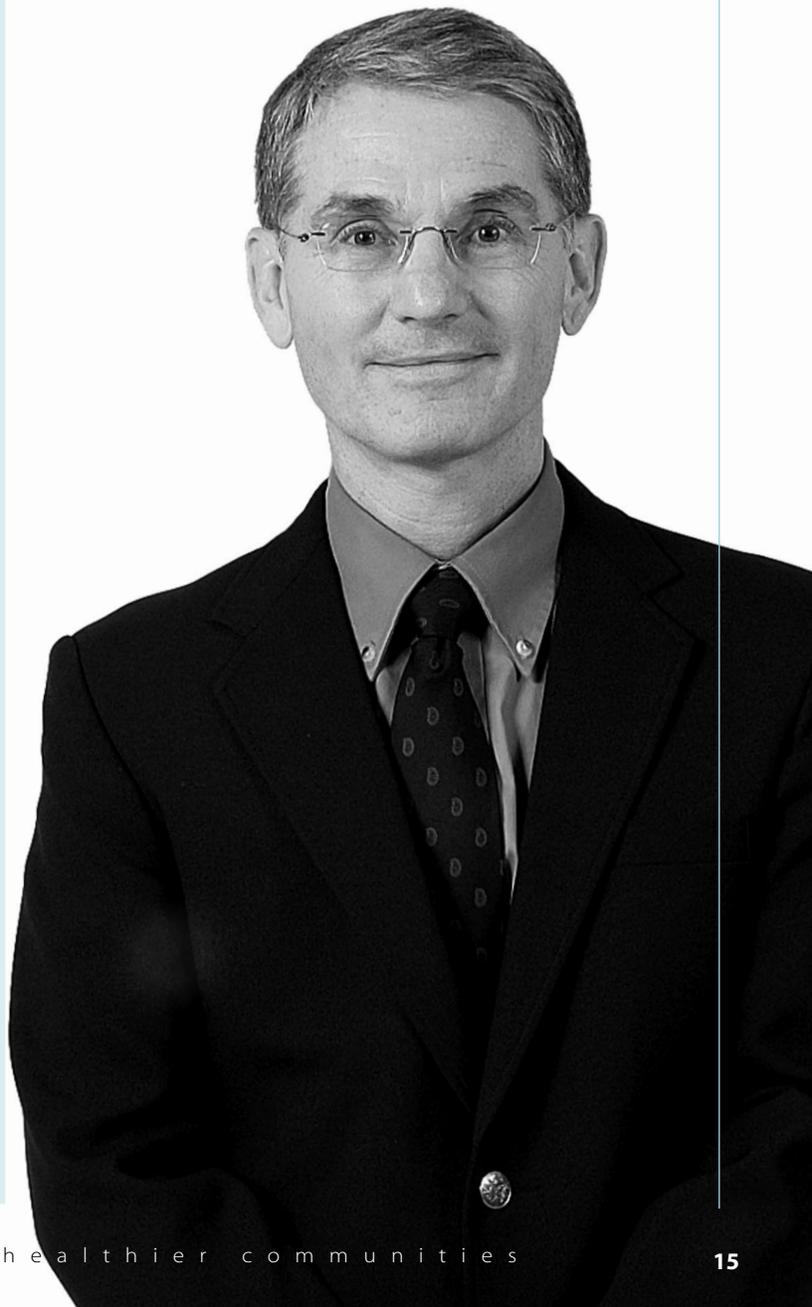
- You stimulate your metabolism and that burns more calories. That's going to help you with your weight gain.
- It's going to burn glycogen stored in your liver, so your blood sugar is going to get better.
- It's going to stimulate your body to produce more muscle tissue, so your insulin is going to work better and you're going to have lower cholesterol.
- It's going to strengthen your joints, so you're going to have less pain.
- It's going to increase your cardiovascular endurance, so it will be easier to breathe and your heart is going to work better.
- It is a great way to help with stress, and it's a wonderful treatment for depression and anxiety.

"Exercise cures a whole lot of the ills that we face in our modern world today," Barton said.

Which is why The Rapides Foundation has chosen physical activity as one of the three major components of its Healthy Behaviors initiative. Now, let's get moving.

"I also tell my patients to exercise first thing in the morning . . . when their energy level is better."

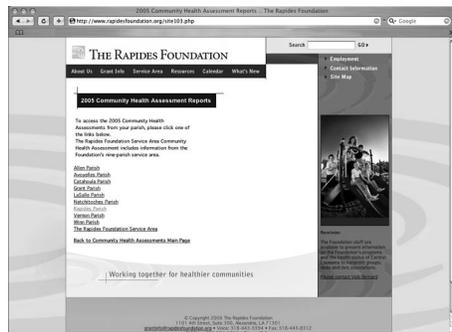
Michael Buck, MD - Family Practice Physician and Rapides Foundation Trustee



2005 PRC Community Health Assessments

2005 Community Health Assessment is now available online

To access the 2005 Community Health Assessments from your parish, go to www.rapidesfoundation.org. The Rapides Foundation Service Area Community Health Assessment includes information from the Foundation's nine-parish service area.



<http://www.rapidesfoundation.org/site103.php>

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|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Allen Parish | Grant Parish | Rapides Parish |
| Avoyelles Parish | LaSalle Parish | Vernon Parish |
| Catahoula Parish | Natchitoches Parish | Winn Parish |

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President/CEO:

Joseph R. Rosier, Jr., CPA, CFA

Editors:

Vicki Bernard
Kathy Gunn

Contributing Writer:

Anne L'Heureux

For additional copies or to be added to the mailing list contact:
The Rapides Foundation
1101 Fourth Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, LA 71301

Tel: 318-443-3394

Fax: 318-443-8312

Toll Free: 1-800-994-3394

Internet: www.rapidesfoundation.org
e-mail: info@rapidesfoundation.org

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