



## **Methodist Children's Home First in Louisiana to Achieve New License**

*October 4, 2012, Louisiana* - Methodist Children's Home of Southwest Louisiana has the remarkable distinction of being Louisiana's first licensed psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF). On Wednesday, October 3, 2012, Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) surveyors conducted a site visit to study the facilities and treatment program. On October 4, license "001" was issued by the Health Standards Section of DHH.

Rick Wheat, President and CEO of Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services, states, "I could not feel prouder of our staff family in Sulphur. They have done remarkable things in a short period of time in a brand new facility. The Methodist Children's Home of Southwest Louisiana is now licensed to provide the most intensive levels of residential care in Louisiana for children with the greatest behavioral and emotional needs."

Now that the 24-bed Methodist Children's Home of Southwest Louisiana has successfully achieved licensure, the larger, 84-bed Louisiana Methodist Children's Home in Ruston will be the next Methodist facility to complete the PRTF licensure process.

Obtaining these new PRTF licenses is an expensive endeavor. A facility must be fully operational as a PRTF on the day of the licensing survey. Across the state, the agency's staff has grown from 400 to 462 during the ramp up to PRTF licensure. New staff positions include Psychiatrists, Nurse Practitioners, additional Registered Nurses and LPNs, additional licensed mental health professionals and an increased number of Mental Health Specialists.

Pointing out the value of the United Methodist Church's support, Wheat said, "We've been able to make this transition only with the strong support of those who believe in caring for Louisiana's neediest children. Without Louisiana United Methodists and our active supporters, we could not have done this."

Steven Franks, Program Director in Sulphur, states, "Southwest Louisiana has blessed MCHSWLA with a continuous outpouring of support. This support has helped us build our staff, our programs, and community relationships. Our success is a reflection of the community of which we are a part and it makes me proud to be here."

Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services continuously enhances its ability to care for children and adolescents whose needs are challenging. Wheat points out, "It is our goal to provide care for the neediest children in Louisiana. This new license allows us to increase the intensity of our treatment programs so we can better care for the children in Louisiana with the most intensive needs. This is another step in our pursuit of our mission to guide children and families home to experience God's love by following the teachings of Christ."

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