

Subject: Federal mobile medical unit arrives in Louisiana

From: Deepwater Horizon Response External Affairs <donotreply@deepwaterhorizonresponse.com>

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Federal mobile medical unit arrives in Louisiana

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VENICE, La. - A federal mobile medical unit arrived in Venice, La., today to provide additional basic medical care for responders and residents of coastal communities affected by the oil spill.

The mobile medical unit, provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in coordination with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, will integrate with the local medical community to triage and provide basic care for responders and residents concerned about health effects of the oil spill. Patients then can be referred to local healthcare providers or hospitals.

"We are very concerned about the impact of the disaster on public health in the Gulf region," Secretary Sebelius said. "We have been on the ground monitoring the spill's impact on health and have remained in close contact with state and local health authorities as well as members of the congressional delegations from the affected states to understand the health and medical needs in these communities. I particularly want to thank Representative Melancon and Senator Landrieu for their efforts to bring the mobile unit to Venice. So far, surveillance efforts have detected complaints of throat irritation, eye irritation, nausea, headache, and coughs—these could be caused by a number of conditions, but we're watching them closely. The mobile medical unit and a medical team arriving today in Louisiana can help address health concerns of local residents and responders."

"While the oil spill is a tragic event environmentally and economically, the impact on the health of Louisianians cannot be overlooked," added LDHH Secretary Alan Levine. "We are glad to be working with Secretary Sebelius and HHS to provide the care our workers and residents need during this crisis."

The mobile unit will be located at 339 Coast Guard Road in Venice, La., and will be staffed by a medical team from the HHS National Disaster Medical System – a doctor, two nurses, two emergency medical technician paramedics (EMT-P) and a pharmacist. HHS activated the National Disaster Medical System as a precaution should Gulf States need additional medical support as a result of the oil spill.

The mobile unit complements a broader effort by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals to ensure access to care including mental health and addictive disorders services.

To learn more about DHH response efforts and services available for coastal communities impacted by the oil spill, visit www.emergency.louisiana.gov. HHS information resources, including food safety updates, health fact sheets, and responder and worker education and training materials, can be found online at <http://www.hhs.gov/gulfoilspill/index.html>.

For information about the response effort, visit www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com.

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