Budget cuts continue to put patients, students at risk

Aaron Gonsoulin
aaron.gonsoulin@thevermilion.com

Following last weekend’s special sessions in Baton Rouge, funding for health services are likely to be cut. For students and professors at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette who utilize the University Hospital and Clinics, these losses could be devastating for the Hospital now and for the future.

“My sense is that (the medical cuts) will not be as devastating,” said Person Cross, Ph.D., a political science professor and associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts at UL Lafayette.

Cross believes these larger cuts are often magnified but the smaller ones are less damning.

The House budget reduced allocations to health care services by more than $500 million, when federal funding is taken into account, according to an article by nola.com.

The article added the budget plan, which is sponsored by House Appropriations Chairman Cameron Henry, R-Metairie, assumes that the Louisiana State Legislature will agree on nearly $400 million in taxes to partially replace $648 million in taxes that expire June 30.

Louisiana Department of Health’s chief financial officer, Jeff Reynolds, said in the article, mental health services, pediatric day care for medically fragile children and substance abuse treatment — both inpatient and outpatient — are likely to be eliminated after July 1 under this plan.

“But more than likely that the patient care won’t be as affected as (much as other) training programs,” Cross said.

These budget cuts could have huge implications on those who work there,
like senior nursing major Mckenzie Baumgartner, as well as the whole state of Louisiana and their patients who need the proper care, especially to those who use UHC.