Clean Air Week being observed

Significant progress has been made in Louisiana's air quality but the overall picture is not as good as it should be, claims the American Lung Association of Louisiana. The health organization says there are "too many hot spots causing acute air pollution episodes and not enough monitors to take pollution samples."

Thus, during Clean Air Week, which is May 2-8, the Lung Association will be making a determined effort to educate the public and the legislature on how important and necessary "team work, commitment and a priority on health" are to keep Louisiana's air at a healthy status.

This year's Clean Air Week theme is "Citizen-Government Partnership in Achieving Clean Air," highlighting the importance of joint participation by citizens and government to control air pollution.

"Clean Air Week has a special significance," according to Jane Blake, R.N., president of the State's Chapter of the American Lung Association. The reason is that Congress now is considering the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act.

"We expect that the new Act will follow the trend set by the Environmental Protection Agency in shifting much of the responsibility for air pollution control from the federal level to state and local governments. Thus, citizens in this community need to be involved in and informed about clean air issues to help make this legislation work," she said.

Add loss of worker productivity because of illness and those costs soar to an estimated $40 billion," she said.

In Louisiana the number of people who are considered as "high risks" to adverse conditions caused by air pollution is over 800,000. Most of these people live in the highly developed industrial corridor from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, says Ms. Blake.

The nurse noted that the Clean Air Act is a public health law. "It was designed to provide protection to those who are already ill and cannot tolerate air pollution. It also was designed to guard against destruction of property, vegetation and crops, and animals. It's one of the most significant and important laws we have and it should not be altered in any way which may cause detrimental health effects," she said.

The American Lung Association is the nation's only voluntary health agency to play a leadership role in national clean air issues. Along with sponsoring Clean Air Week, the Lung...
Association issues information on the health effects of air pollution to the medical and lay public, works to ensure national legislation on air pollution controls, and reviews and suggests priorities for air pollution research.

Information on Air Pollution is available from the American Lung Association of Louisiana, Suite 500, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70130-3180.