

State Senator David R. Heitmeier, O.D.

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For Immediate Release
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Doctors Team Up To Garner Haitian Medical Donations

NEW ORLEANS – The tragic earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, has drawn humanitarian aid from throughout the world and New Orleans is no different in its efforts.

Dr. Yvens Laborde, a native Haitian and New Orleanian, recently returned after three weeks in Haiti. “I was reminded of the devastation felt during Hurricane Katrina, but I was also inspired by the gratitude and resilience of the Haitian people,” Laborde said. Weeks of improbable rescues, tearful reunions and astonishing displays of resilience followed. Laborde is the Ochsner West Bank Regional medical director and President of the New Orleans Academy of Internal Medicine.

But Dr. Laborde’s special connection to Haiti has inspired residents of New Orleans. State Senator David R. Heitmeier, O.D., an optometrist and resident of the Westbank also remembered the dark days following Hurricane Katrina when New Orleanians felt forgotten. Heitmeier and Laborde serve together on the Ochsner Medical Center – West Bank governing board. The friends began working on how their professional relationships could be called upon to help.

Heitmeier contacted government agencies to request any resources available for emergency foreign aid while Laborde talked to Ochsner about administering at no cost a fund raising campaign for medical supplies so that 100% of the contributions will go to medical efforts in Haiti.

“Giving back is what New Orleans does best,” said Heitmeier who is helping Laborde and Ochsner promote the cause. For information on the Ochsner Haitian Relief Fund, go to www.ochsner.org/lp/haitianrelief or call 504-842-7120.

“With Dr. Laborde on the ground, and 100% of the donations going to provide medical assets with an established Haitian relief organization, the success of the mission now only depends on the generosity of New Orleanians,” Heitmeier added.