

T CONVERSATIONS

Medical School deserves praise for accreditation



Jack Sharp

Guest columnist

Recently, an announcement was made in Northwest Louisiana that undoubtedly is one of the most significant in quite some time. LSU Health Shreveport, our Shreveport/Bossier City and North Louisiana medical school, received full, eight-year accreditation status.

I suspect some believe accreditation is a formality that all medical schools obtain. But, in truth, it is a status that is one of distinction.

One of the nation's top 10 medical schools, which happens to be in neighboring Texas, was placed on probation by the same review team that issued full accreditation to the medical school here. Is it beginning to sink in now that our LSU medical school and its administration, faculty and staff are to be cherished?

It is important to recognize that our medical school trains many of the physicians and clinicians who provide us with top-notch clinical care in North Louisiana. This care is not only for those who otherwise could not receive care at all, but for even the wealthiest of citizens who need and seek the most current expertise, all supported by academic leadership and clinical research.

Where else can one go to find a Level 1 trauma center? How about a top-quality burn center? A cancer treatment center with affiliation to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for pediatric cancer management? MDs and PhDs doing basic and clinical research "from bench to bedside?"

Yes, our medical school is a community treasure. But to grow in stature and capacity, as it should, it needs to be fully embraced and fully supported by all in our community. There can be no question now about the success of our medical school's leadership team and that our school's prospects are all the brighter now due to the security of accreditation.

The Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education congratulates Chancellor Bob Barish and the administration, faculty and staff of the medical school. I also encourage all of you reading this today to add your voice to the growing chorus letting them all know that this jewel of North Louisiana is needed, valued and applauded.

Jack Sharp is chairman-elect of the Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education.