

Mental health services planned in spill deal

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NEW ORLEANS (AP) - A \$14.4 million share of the BP oil spill settlement will bring mental health counselors to areas across four states affected by the 2010 disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

The LSU Health Sciences Center, the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of South Alabama, the University of West Florida, Tulane University and the Louisiana Public Health Institute will join for the 5-year program.

It's 1 of 4 projects included in the estimated \$7.8 billion settlement reached in May by BP and a committee of plaintiffs. The settlement has received preliminary approval of a federal judge.

Dr. Harold Osofsky, chairman of psychiatry at LSUHSC, says the program consolidates expertise in the affected states and is designed to deal with mental health issues lingering from the nation's worst offshore oil disaster.

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