

Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)

2025 Fact Sheet

About

The mission of the Office of Behavioral Health is to work collaboratively with partners to develop and implement a comprehensive integrated system of behavioral health and healthcare, social supports, and prevention services that promote recovery and resilience for all residents of Louisiana. OBH assures public behavioral health services are accessible, family-driven, have a positive impact, are culturally and clinically competent, and are delivered in partnership with all stakeholders.

The agency also acts as a monitor and subject matter consultant for the children's Coordinated System of Care program (CSoc) and the Medicaid Healthy Louisiana managed care plans, which manage behavioral health services.

Learn more about OBH at ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/94.

Leadership

Holly Howat, Ph.D., Interim Assistant Secretary

Vanessa de la Cruz, MD, Medical Director

Amanda Joyner, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Administration and Finance

Quinetta Womack, LPC, LAC, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Behavioral Health Clinical/Community Programs

Robyn McDermott, MS, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Health Plan Management

Jenna Young, Deputy Assistant Secretary, 24-Hour Facilities

Celeste Gauthier, Mental Hospital Administrator 2, Central Louisiana State Hospital

Chad Hinton, Interim Mental Hospital Administrator 3, Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System

Programs and Services

OBH programs and services primarily meet the needs of:

- Adults and youth with emotional or mental disturbances
- Adults and adolescents with substance use and other related addictive disorders, such as gambling, tobacco, and opioid use disorder
- Individuals with co-occurring behavioral health disorders
- Pregnant and parenting women, and women with dependent children with substance use disorders or mental illness
- Individuals in need of forensic-related mental health treatment

Local Governing Entities (LGE)

Legislation mandates that independent human services districts or authorities (referred to as Local Governing Entities, or LGEs) operate the local administration of the Louisiana behavioral healthcare system, including community and residential services. LGEs deliver direct services across the lifespan to individuals in Louisiana with serious mental illnesses, other mental conditions, emotional disturbances, and/or substance use disorder in clinical settings. These behavioral health clinics provide screening and assessment, emergency crisis care, individual evaluation and treatment, medication administration and management, clinical casework services, specialized services for children and adolescents, specialized criminal justice services, specialized services for the elderly, and pharmacy services.

Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)

OBH ensures the following services:

Specialty Services	Hospital-Based Treatment	Coordinated System of Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention, education, outreach, and awareness of mental and substance use disorders • Mental health promotion and suicide prevention • Peer and recovery supports • Residential substance use disorder services for pregnant and parenting women and their children • Opioid Treatment Programs • Intensive inpatient and outpatient substance use care • Disaster recovery and emergency response coordination • Louisiana 988 helpline • Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) Program for children (ages 0-5) and their families • Housing supports for individuals with behavioral health conditions and unstable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Use Recovery through the efficient use of evidence-informed care and successful transition to community-based services • Forensic psychiatric services • Services for individuals found to be not guilty by reason of insanity and those in need of competency restoration • Operation of two state-owned psychiatric facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System ○ Central Louisiana State Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with LDH, DCFS, DOE, OJJ, Governor’s Office, and family/youth representatives • Established for children and youth (ages 5-20) who have complex behavioral health needs or co-occurring disorders and are either in or at risk of out-of-home placement • Specialized services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parent support and training ○ Youth support and training ○ Short-term respite ○ Independent living/skills building <p>*To access CSoc, parents/ caregivers or concerned others may contact the child or youth’s Healthy Louisiana managed care plan for the initial screening process. Learn more at www.CSoC.la.gov.</p>

The Louisiana 988 helpline directs Louisiana residents to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress. The line is free and 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information, please visit: [Louisiana 988](http://Louisiana988.org). To access help now, call or text 988. Chat options are also available via [988 chat](http://Louisiana988.org/chat).

The Louisiana Crisis Response System (LA-CRS) service is an integrated crisis system of care available for Louisiana residents. For more information, please visit [LA-CRS](http://LA-CRS.org). To access services in your area, please call 855-242-2735 or visit LouisianaCrisisConnect.org.