

Office of Public Health

About

The mission of the Department of Health (LDH) Office of Public Health (OPH) is to protect and promote the health and wellness of all individuals and communities in Louisiana. We accomplish this through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, preventing disease and injury, enforcing regulations that protect the environment, sharing vital information and assuring preventive services to uninsured and underserved individuals and families.

OPH is divided into 4 centers, 14 bureaus, and more than 50 programs that provide key services in the areas of personal health, environmental health, community and rural health, emergency medical personnel regulation, as well as vital records, statistics, and informatics. OPH provides services directly or through contracts in 62 Parish Health Units (PHUs) across the state. The OPH team consists of engineers, epidemiologists, doctors, chemists, biologists, nurses, sanitarians, clinicians, emergency preparedness experts, data scientists, and various other healthcare professionals who are devoted to improving the quality of life for Louisiana residents.

Characterized by a trained and highly motivated workforce, OPH employs evidence-based practices to ensure that all people in Louisiana have the opportunity to grow, develop, and live in an environment that promotes the physical, behavioral and social health of individuals, families and communities. As custodians of the public's trust, OPH strives to emphasize the importance of individual and family health.

Leadership

Tonya Joiner, Assistant Secretary

Sallie Guy, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary

Dr. Juliette Saussy, Chief Medical Officer

Elizabeth Adkins, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Center for Community and Preventive Health

Jen Katzman, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Center for Finance and Administration

Dr. Glennis Gray, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Center for Community Preparedness and Health Protection

Carol Walker, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Center of Environmental Health

Meah Johnson, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

Programs and Services

Center for Community and Preventive Health (CCPH)

The Center for Community and Preventive Health offers a variety of programs and services designed to improve public health measures in Louisiana. The programs and services offered by CCPH include screenings, healthcare needs assessments, laboratory testing services, infectious disease reporting, and nutrition programs. This Center houses the following Bureaus:

Bureau of Family Health

The Bureau of Family Health (BFH) works to promote the health and well-being of families in Louisiana. BFH's activities include newborn screening, public health surveillance, and analytics (such as maternal health and deaths, and sickle cell disease), and system change initiatives such as the Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative. In furtherance of its efforts, BFH administers the state's Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant program, the Title X Family Planning program, and sets the programmatic priorities for many other initiatives designed to improve the health of men and women of reproductive age, pregnant women, children and youth with special healthcare needs, and families.

Bureau of Infectious Diseases

The Bureau of Infectious Diseases (BID) consists of five sections: Sexually Transmitted Infections/HIV/Hepatitis, Tuberculosis (TB) Control and Prevention, Immunization, Infectious Disease Epidemiology, and Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology. BID manages the statewide immunization program, distributes infectious disease surveillance reports, and studies the distribution of infectious diseases in the community. BID is responsible for carrying out and coordinating preventative programs to mitigate the spread of communicable diseases and positively influence infectious disease-related data in this state. BID also houses the State Epidemiologist, who plays a key role in providing expert epidemiologic, scientific, and technical leadership for the critical public health systems and processes that detect and control infectious diseases, foodborne and vector-borne diseases, hazardous environmental exposures, bioterrorism threats, and other public health emergencies.

Bureau of Regional and Clinical Operations

The mission of the Bureau of Regional and Clinical Operations (BRCO) is to improve the quality of life for Louisiana residents by addressing clinical and health-related social needs in this state and the community health factors that influence them. BRCO consists of nine regional offices, which house 62 PHUs and two specialty clinics that work to ensure disaster preparedness and safety. BRCO is the unit responsible for executing programmatic priorities through service delivery throughout the state, specifically, offering preventive and clinical health services to Louisiana residents. Services include immunizations, reproductive health resources, sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment, WIC, Children's Special Healthcare Services and tuberculosis resources. BRCO also ensures access to vital (death) records and links individuals to Community Health Workers (CHWs) to help resolve identified health-related social needs.

Bureau of Nutrition Services

The Bureau of Nutrition Services (BONS) provides food, nutrition counseling, breastfeeding promotion, breastfeeding support, and access to health services to low-income women, infants, and children. BONS houses the USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which offers foods, nutrition counseling, breastfeeding promotion, breastfeeding support and access to health services to low-income women, infants, and children. Louisiana WIC currently provides services to nearly 106,000 participants a month throughout 100 clinic sites. BONS also manages requests for information and resources relative to nutrition access through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for seniors.

Center for Finance and Administration

The Center for Finance and Administration is comprised of the Bureau of Finance & Operations, Bureau of Vital Records & Statistics, Bureau of Health Informatics, and Bureau of Planning & Performance. The Center manages the day-to-day financial and administrative operations of OPH, which includes budget management, providing public records and statistics, and collecting, analyzing, and disseminating health-related data, among others. This Center also oversees the implementation of population health data reporting and monitors the agency's overall performance and public health workforce development, maintaining OPH's public health accreditation. Bureaus within this Center have the following functions:

Bureau of Vital Records and Statistics

The Bureau of Vital Records and Statistics (BVRS) consists of official records of birth, death, fetal death, and Orleans Parish marriage records. BVRS provides records that are essential for the administration of state law, as well as the protection of individual rights. Constituents often contact BVRS to obtain birth, death, adoption, and marriage certificates. BVRS also assists individuals who wish to amend birth/death certificates or need resources relative to the Orleans Parish marriage records.

Bureau of Finance and Operations

The Bureau of Finance and Operations (BFO) is responsible for managing the agency budget, maximizing the collection of revenues for services performed at Public Health Units, and providing administrative support services to all bureaus within the Office of Public Health. BFO's key functions include annual budget development, monitoring, and forecasting, statewide billing and collection of self-generated revenues, grants and contracts management, and operational support services such as fleet and asset management.

Bureau of Planning and Performance

The Bureau of Planning and Performance (BP2) ensures that OPH is a high-performing public health agency that meets or exceeds national standards for public health accreditation. Focus areas include workforce development, performance management, quality improvement, strategic planning, and State Health Assessment/State Health Improvement Plan development and implementation.

Bureau of Health Informatics

The Bureau of Health Informatics (BHI) serves as the hub for many OPH-wide data and informatics efforts. BHI coordinates legislative mandates for reporting, manages Meaningful Use for Public Health, provides data and visualization services, and manages the Electronic Health Records system for the PHUs. BHI also contributes to other office-wide and external efforts and partnerships relative to data sharing and technology strategies.

Center for Community Preparedness and Health Protection

The Center for Community Preparedness & Health Protection is an agency that plans state-level responses to public health emergencies and works to improve healthcare access within the community. It combines the functions of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Healthcare Access, and the Bureau of Community Preparedness to achieve its goals. The Center for Community Preparedness and Health Protection is responsible for ensuring the preparedness and resiliency of the state public health organizations for all potential public health emergencies, such as terrorism, natural disasters, pandemics, outbreaks, ice storms and flooding, as well as manufactured events like oil and chemical spills. The Center works to reduce the burden of chronic disease and assures access to quality health care for all Louisiana residents where they live, work, learn, play and pray. The Center is also responsible for the overall planning, coordination, licensing and regulation of Louisiana's Emergency Services System.

Bureau of Community Preparedness

The Bureau of Community Preparedness (BCP) is responsible for the coordination, storage, maintenance, and deployment of resources such as state medical supplies, equipment, and emergency response trailers in support of Emergency Support Function (ESF)-8 operations. BCP ensures compliance with Emergency Preparedness grant guidelines and mandates. BCP also maintains the state's response plan, implements training, and facilitates programs to prepare staff for activation to respond to a public health threat or disaster.

Bureau of Emergency Medical Services

The Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) is responsible for the overall coordination, licensing, and regulation of Louisiana's EMS systems. Services include establishing ambulance standards, the EMS certification commission, and credentialing. Its mission is to coordinate, develop, improve, and maintain a comprehensive and dynamic emergency medical services system for the state that ensures prompt, effective, and unimpeded service by appropriately educated and licensed EMS Providers and Practitioners to all residents and visitors to the state.

Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Healthcare Access (Well-Ahead Louisiana)

The Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Healthcare Access (BCDPHA), branded as Well-Ahead Louisiana, is the chronic disease prevention and healthcare access division of LDH OPH. Well-Ahead Louisiana works with community leaders to improve our state's health statistics for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, tobacco use, and other chronic diseases. The mission of Well-Ahead Louisiana is to expand our community health systems' capacity to provide integrated, efficient, and effective healthcare services to all Louisiana residents and reduce the burden of chronic disease.

Center of Environmental Health

The Center for Environmental Health is composed of the Bureau of Sanitarian Services, Bureau of Engineering, and Bureau of Laboratory Services. Its functions go as follows:

Bureau of Sanitarian Services

The mission of the Bureau of Sanitarian Services (BSS/SANS) is to enforce state laws, rules and regulations relative to the maintenance and promotion of community hygiene. SANS is statutorily mandated to review and regulate certain public facilities and materials to ensure regulatory compliance and reduce risks associated with environmental hazards. SANS-regulated facilities and materials include but are not limited to restaurants, grocery stores, sewer systems, ice-vending units, wholesale warehouses, and more. Monitoring such facilities and materials includes investigating environmental causes of food- and water-borne outbreaks and inspecting establishments.

Bureau of Engineering

The Bureau of Engineering performs plan reviews and permits for new construction or modification of drinking water facilities, wastewater facilities, institutions, as well as inspection, sampling, and supervision of public water supplies. This Bureau houses the Safe Drinking Water program and the Community Sewerage Program.

The Safe Drinking Water program conducts supervision of roughly 1,285 public water systems representing 90% of the population, in order to provide comprehensive drinking water protection for the residents and visitors of Louisiana. Whereas, the Community Sewerage Program regulates sewage treatment, sanitary sewage disposal, and other wastewater matters in order to safeguard the health of the public.

Bureau of Laboratory Services

The mission of the Bureau of Laboratory Services (OPH Lab) is to protect the health and safety of the residents and visitors in Louisiana by providing accurate and timely laboratory data to state officials and public health programs. In furtherance of its mission, the OPH Lab performs laboratory tests in support of many state programs, including infectious epidemiology, PHUs, engineering services, hospitals, corrections, nursing homes, and others. OPH Lab services also include preventive health, environmental health, infectious disease, environmental epidemiology, emergency preparedness and disaster response, and forensic testing for biological and chemical threats.

Legislative & Regulatory Affairs

The **Bureau of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs** (BLRA) is a resource for the development and enactment of legislation, regulations, and policies to protect and promote public health for all individuals and communities in Louisiana. The BLRA mission is to create a robust public health legislative, regulatory, and policy framework for the Office of Public Health to use in the development of its legislative proposals, administrative rules, and public health policies. It fosters collaboration and partnerships with community stakeholders. BLRA oversees OPH's legislative and administrative rulemaking implementation and enforcement of legislation and regulations. It is also responsible for monitoring current and upcoming legislation, regulations, and policy adoption while evaluating its impact.