

Office on Women's Health and Community Health (OWHCH)

2025 Fact Sheet

About

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Office of Women's Health and Community Health (OWHCH) was established via Senate Bill 116 by Senator Regina Barrow and signed into law by former Governor John Bel Edwards in June of 2022. OWHCH is dedicated to focusing on improving women's health outcomes and serve as a clearing house, coordinating agency and resource center for women's health data and strategies. Issues of focus include needs throughout a woman's life; chronic or acute conditions; access to healthcare; how poverty impacts women's health; leading causes of morbidity and mortality and health disparities. Through policy, education, evidence-based practices, programs and services, OWHCH is dedicated to addressing women's health-related needs through all aspects of life.

Leadership

- **Vacant**, Assistant Secretary
- **Courtney Highshaw**, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Programs and Services

Maternal Wellness Center Registration

In accordance with Act No. 437 of the 2023 Regular Session, OWHCH is processing maternal wellness center registrations that are used to create a voluntary registry of eligible maternal wellness centers on the LDH website. The Department of Revenue uses this registry to determine eligibility of donations towards state income tax credits for donors. These credits are applicable for income taxable periods beginning on or after January 1, 2025.

Louisiana OWHCH Resource Map

OWHCH developed an asset map, which serves as an online, interactive guide to services available to women across the state. The asset map highlights the locations of local: Birth Centers, Councils on Aging, Food Banks, Housing Authorities, Job Centers, and Senior Centers. This initiative aligns with the mission of OWHCH to serve as a clearinghouse for women's health support, ensuring that all women, regardless of their location, can make informed decisions about their health and well-being. The asset map allows users to filter the resources shown by category, and provides contact information for each facility listed.

Our asset map can be found at ldh.la.gov/page/owhch-asset-map. OWHCH invites organizations and providers to join this effort by being included on the map. If you would like to add your services to the asset map, please contact us at OWHCH@la.gov.

Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) Grant

Louisiana has been awarded \$17 million to implement the Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) Model over the next ten years. This initiative comes through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and aims to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, reduce disparities, and increase access to high-quality, coordinated care. OWHCH is working with the Bureau of Health Services Financing (Medicaid) in accomplishing the key activities and goals of the grant. These goals include:

- **Enhance Data Infrastructure:** Improve systems to better meet stakeholders' needs and address care gaps.
- **Expand Home Monitoring:** Increase access to home monitoring for diabetes and hypertension.
- **Strengthen Mental Health and SUD Support:** Expand risk assessment, screening, referrals, and follow-up for perinatal depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, and health-related social needs (HRSNs).
- **Support Midwifery and Birth Centers:** Address regulatory barriers and foster a supportive environment through the Community Birth Initiative.

LDH is committed to maintaining transparency throughout the implementation of the TMaH model and will provide regular updates on progress, changes, and key milestones on the dedicated TMaH webpage, available at ldh.la.gov/page/tmah. Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the page for the latest information and resources related to the model.