

Bobby Jindal
GOVERNOR



Kathy H. Kliebert
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of the Secretary

February 12, 2015

The Honorable John A. Alario, Jr., President
Louisiana State Senate
P.O. Box 94182
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

The Honorable Charles E. Kleckley, Speaker
Louisiana State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 94062
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear President Alario and Speaker Kleckley:

Pursuant to Act 534 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session by Representative Patricia Smith, the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Department of Education (LDOE) submit this report on its review and evaluation of programs available to educate the youth of Louisiana about the importance of preventing teen pregnancy and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

LDOE, DCFS, and DHH are committed to providing comprehensive education and services to youth in Louisiana through a wide variety of programming across the departments and state. The recommendations in the attached report and the shared information will help frame the realities and challenges as the departments continue their work on these issues.

If you have any questions concerning the report, please contact Thomas Thompson, Policy Director, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, 225.342.2025 or Thomas.thompson@la.gov.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John White in blue ink.

John White
Superintendent of Education

Handwritten signature of Suzy Sonnier in blue ink.

Suzy Sonnier
Secretary, DCFS

Handwritten signature of Kathy H. Kliebert in blue ink.

Kathy H. Kliebert
Secretary, DHH

cc: Rep. Patricia Smith
David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library

Report Produced in Response to Act 534 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session

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Pursuant to Act 534 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session by Representative Smith, the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Department of Education (LDOE) submit this report on its review and evaluation of programs available to educate the youth of Louisiana about the importance of preventing teen pregnancy and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Nationally, teen pregnancy rates in the United States have been declining in recent years and Louisiana has been following the same trend. However, Louisiana's rates remain higher than the national average. In 2013, the teen birth rate for fifteen to nineteen year olds in Louisiana was 39.04 births per 1,000 Louisiana resident girls, ages fifteen to nineteen. Louisiana ranked as the state with the 7th highest rate in teen pregnancies in 2012. The state has numerous policies, programs and initiatives intended to address teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. They are summarized below.

Programs Available Through the Department of Education

The following programs and initiatives are in place at the Louisiana Department of Education LDE addressing teen pregnancy and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

YRBS and School Health Profiles

LDOE is funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to assess the effectiveness of sexual health education programs using the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS) and the School Health Profiles Survey (Profiles). In the current funding cycle, Louisiana was only eligible for Strategy 1 funding (Surveillance).

The YRBS is a national school-based survey of high school students which is implemented by the LDOE biennially to monitor priority high-risk behaviors among youth. The survey is administered to randomly selected high schools. Students are asked, but not required, to complete the survey. The survey focuses on priority risk behaviors including Alcohol and Other Drug Use, Obesity, Physical Activity, Mental Health, Tobacco, Injury/Accident Prevention, and Violence and Bullying. Results from the YRBS are used to guide programs and policies that support health and set and track progress toward achieving school health and health promotion program goals.

A second survey, Profiles, is a school personnel survey that assesses school health policies and practices. Profiles, also conducted biennially, is used to assess school health policies and practices in states, large urban school districts, territories, and tribal governments. The survey monitors the status of school health education requirements and content, physical education and physical activity, school health policies related to HIV infection/AIDS, tobacco-use prevention, and nutrition, asthma management activities, family and community involvement in school health programs, and school health coordination.

Data from both surveys is shared with schools and school districts to inform decision-making regarding programs and policies related to student behavior and health.

Health Education Standards

Louisiana's Health Education Content Standards, which are contained in BESE Bulletin 103, offer a coherent vision of what it means to be health literate. Health literacy is the capacity of an individual to obtain, interpret, and comprehend basic health information and services and the competence to use such information and services in ways that are health enhancing for the individual, family, and community. These standards identify the knowledge and skills essential to the development of health literacy. In addition, the standards provide a guide for enhancing and continuing education of teachers and as a blueprint for local curriculum developers. The standards are broad enough to allow flexibility according to strengths or challenges identified in each community and to make them culturally relevant.

A fundamental mission of schools is the promotion of healthy behaviors by providing individuals with knowledge, abilities, and skills to become healthy and productive citizens. Optimal health leads to effective living, learning and enjoyment of life for all individuals. It is also an asset for students facing intense competition, peer pressure, stress, and a full program of intellectual and physical activities. The primary purpose of health education is the translation and integration of health concepts into personal behavior. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use as well as low levels of physical activity, poor nutrition, injuries, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and stress contribute to a lower health status and result in loss of work and school time.

Health education in schools is essential to enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to practice good health. Implementation of planned, sequential health curricula has been linked to changes in students' attitudes and behaviors. Poor health habits often carry over into adulthood. Students who follow good health habits are more alert, perform at a higher level, are absent less, and have greater self-esteem.

Traditionally, the health education curriculum has been organized around health content topic areas. Today, greater emphasis is placed on health and wellness. The Health Education Content Standards are an ideal means for providing guidelines for curriculum addressing high-risk behaviors and healthy lifestyles.

The CDC has identified six risk behaviors that are incorporated in the organization of the Health Education Content Standards. The six risk behaviors include:

- Tobacco use;
- Sedentary lifestyle/poor physical activity patterns;
- Alcohol and drug abuse;
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors;
- Behaviors that result in accidents and injuries; and
- Sexual behaviors that result in STIs and unintended pregnancy.

The Louisiana Health Education Content Standards framework is designed to guide the process of reforming health education in this state. It provides the following:

- a framework for developing a comprehensive K-12 health education curriculum;
- a catalyst for insightful discussion of the fundamental nature of health education;
- a guide for evaluating progress and achieving health education benchmarks among the students of Louisiana;
- a vision of health education for the state; and
- a tool to enable local districts, schools, and educators to grasp the nature, purpose, and role of health education.

Programs Available through the Department of Children and Family Services

The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) focuses on three core goals for the agency's vision: working to keep children safe, helping individuals and families become self-sufficient, and providing safe refuge during disasters. DCFS does not have programming that is explicitly focused on preventing teen pregnancy, but as part of DCFS's work to encourage the health and safety of families it has several programs that are aligned with the need to prevent teen pregnancy in Louisiana and to support pregnant teens by providing them with services that can help them build parenting skills.

DCFS administers federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant funds for the state. All TANF-funded services must meet one of four TANF Goals:

Goal 1: Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes, or the homes of relatives.

Goal 2: End dependence of needy families on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

Goal 3: Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Goal 4: Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Therefore, as part of its work administering TANF funds, DCFS provides funds to several programs to address Goal 3, "Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies."

DCFS strives to support families and help them thrive. Through our foster care and adoptive services, at risk children and families receive services like parenting classes and case management services in addition to access to family resource centers. Also, through DCFS's commitment to funding parent-focused programs like alternatives to abortion and CASA, teen parents are engaged and help them to choose adoption opportunities for their child or access services that can help them become better parents.

Abortion Alternatives

DCFS currently funds two service providers that provide alternatives to abortion for expecting teen parents. These service providers are able to offer services state-wide by subcontracting with 21 service providers in all regions around the state. Contractors are required to provide

intervention services including crisis intervention, counseling, mentoring, support services, and pre-natal care information, in addition to information and referrals regarding healthy childbirth, adoption, and parenting to help ensure healthy and full-term pregnancies as an alternative to abortion. In fiscal year 2014, 8,298 people were served.

Court-Appointed Special Advocates

Through the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, CASA, DCFS funds mentors to children offering support and guidance. This encouragement and empowerment to be successful in becoming a responsible decision maker, helps deter the child from engaging in risky behaviors such as teen pregnancy, substance abuse, school dropout, etc. In FY2014 CASA focused on pregnancy prevention, goal setting and career development for 21,821 children.

Drug Courts Program

The Drug Courts Program served 13,065 clients last year by providing counseling to children and family members on the basic need to be free of alcohol and substance abuse, and the benefits of completing one's education. Through these initiatives, there is an added outcome of teen pregnancy prevention.

Jobs for America's Graduates Louisiana

The Jobs for America's Graduates Louisiana (JAG-LA) Program provides intervention and improved life prospects for students who show evidence of failing, dropping out or engaging in negative behaviors that can lead to dependency, out-of-wedlock births, imprisonment, and/or other undesirable outcomes which may lead to the detriment and impoverishment of youth. There were 24,255 participants in the Multi Year Model Program, 2,318 in the Out-of School Model Program, and 6,268 in the Middle School Model Program in 2014.

LA 4 Public Pre-Kindergarten Program

Research indicates that at-risk children who attend quality preschool programs have a decreased incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, high school dropouts, and incarceration. The LA 4 Public Pre-Kindergarten Program will meet these goals through the provision of early education and support services for all enrolled four-year-olds and their families, serving an average of 15,772 children in FY 2014.

Programs Available Through the Department of Health and Hospitals

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), Office of Public Health (OPH) has several teen pregnancy programs across the state:

Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®)

TOP® is a 9-month program implemented in community based settings in select parishes in Louisiana that have the highest rates of teen births. It serves children from ages twelve to seventeen. Wyman Center Inc.'s TOP® provides communities and organizations with a tested framework for creating and/or enhancing youth development efforts that empowers teen to lead successful lives and build strong communities. This program is one of only a few that is proven effective in increasing school success and prevention teen pregnancy. Over 6,300 Louisiana

youth have enrolled since TOP[®] started in 2011 reaching 90% of the programs goal of 7,000 in sixty-seven TOP[®] clubs.

Agencies implementing TOP[®] on behalf of DHH are Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies-New Orleans and surrounding parishes; Family Roads of Greater Baton Rouge-Greater Baton Rouge and surrounding parishes; Southwest Louisiana AHEC-Lafayette and surrounding parishes; Southwest Louisiana AIDs Council-Calcasieu and surrounding parishes; Volunteers of America-Alexandria-Rapides and surrounding parishes; Volunteers of America-Shreveport-Caddo and surrounding parishes; Louisiana Center Against Poverty-Ouachita and surrounding parishes

Youth are enrolled into a randomized control trial through active program and evaluation consent. All youth complete pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys at the indicated time period, with incentives. Daily evaluation requires completion of attendance and community service learning logs; along with the fidelity monitoring log. Monthly evaluation requires completion of a monthly activity report by all contractors. Quarterly evaluation includes completion of Wyman's fidelity monitoring tool, webinars in which data is shared and discussed with contractors, and required participation in site visits and observations. Reach, dosage, fidelity and all performance measures are reported and monitored through OAH's federal reporting system at the required time periods throughout the year.

Family Planning Program-Clinical Services in Public Health Units

In sixty-nine service sites statewide, men and women (including adolescents) receive education and counseling on contraception, STI risk, and family planning. Confidential and age-appropriate services are provided to adolescents. In 2012, 487 men and 35,203 women were served— 6,819 adolescents. Clinic sites are evaluated in an annual federal report as well as regular quality assurance and improvement activities including targeted chart reviews, productivity reports (numbers served), and quarterly clinic flow analysis. In addition to these reports, an annual comprehensive site assessment is completed in the fall according to the federal Title X quality assurance tool.

Nurse-Family Partnership

The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is a voluntary, free maternal and childhood health program for first-time mothers, from pregnancy until their babies are two years old, where mothers are paired with nurse home visitors. Expecting fathers are encouraged to participate in the visits, and families in the program have a 46% increase in father presence in the household. The Nurse-Family Partnership program served 3,007 families in 2014. DHH administers this program with support from DCFS.

Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)

The STD/HIV Program was awarded federal funds through the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) to implement Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) across the state of Louisiana. Through PREP, FYSB awards grants to State agencies to educate young people in both abstinence and contraception to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

PREP projects replicate effective, evidence-based program models or substantially incorporate elements of projects that have been proven to delay sexual activity, increase condom or contraceptive use for sexually active youth, or reduce pregnancy among youth. The program targets youth ages 10-19 who are homeless, in foster care, live in geographic areas with high teen birth rates, or come from racial or ethnic minority groups. The program also supports pregnancy youth and mothers under the age of 21.

As of November 1, 2014, over 1000 youth have participated in PREP programming across the state.

Projects are currently running in seven regions statewide. The STD/HIV Program currently works with seven community based organizations across the state to provide two program models:

- **Project AIM** is a group level intervention for youth ages 11-14. Project AIM encourages young people to envision a positive possible future and discuss risk behaviors that could be a barrier to successful adulthood. This intervention is designed to reduce HIV, STD and pregnancy risk behavior among youth. The Baton Rouge Black Alcoholism Council/ Metro Health Education is implementing Project AIM in the Baton Rouge metro area.
- **Sisters Informing, Healing, Living and Empowering (SIHLE)** is a group level, peer-led, social skills training intervention aimed at reducing HIV risk behavior among African American teenage females, ages 14-18. SIHLE emphasizes ethnic and gender pride, healthy relationships, assertive communication, and enhances awareness of HIV risk reduction strategies. Six organizations are currently implementing SIHLE program statewide: the Greater Baton Rouge YWCA, Acadiana Cares in Lafayette, SWLA Center for Health Services in Lake Charles, Louisiana Prevention Training Center/Baton Rouge AIDS Society in Alexandria, The Philadelphia Center in Shreveport, The Philadelphia Center in Monroe and Face to Face Enrichment Center in Hammond. In the coming year, the Baton Rouge AIDS Society in Baton Rouge will begin implementing the SIHLE program as well.

School-Based Health Centers

The Louisiana OPH/STD/HIV Program collaborates with School-Based Health Centers to provide trainings on STD/HIV screening as requested. In addition to offering trainings for the SBHC, the LA OPH/STD/HIV program also provides financial assistance to SBHC's by covering their laboratory costs for STI testing, treatment (for approximately 20 centers), and HIV test kits.

Louisiana Youth for Excellence (LYFE), the Governors Abstinence Education Program

The Louisiana Youth for Excellence (LYFE), the Governors Abstinence Education Program, has partnered with Louisiana schools to implement the Choosing the Best Curriculum. Choosing the Best is an 8-hour abstinence based sex education program, which is being implemented in all 9 Public Health Regions in 20/64 Louisiana Parishes.

Louisiana Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Louisiana Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition developed among OAH grantees in Louisiana- the Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies providing training and technical assistance to LPHI's teen pregnancy prevention program; Tulane University adapting the SiHLE program for electronic teen pregnancy prevention programming; LPHI implementing a clinic-based teen pregnancy prevention model; Central AHEC partnering with the La. National Guard to implement a youth challenge teen pregnancy prevention program.

Legal Requirements for Sex Education and Health Education in Louisiana for the Department of Education

Sex Education

Louisiana law (R.S. 17:281) sets forth how local education agencies may instruct students in sex education. BESE has adopted regulations pursuant to this law, which are found in Bulletin 741, §2305 which states:

§2305. Ancillary Areas of Instruction

- D. Any public school in Louisiana may offer instruction in sex education, provided such instruction and subject matter is integrated into an existing course of study such as biology, science, physical hygiene, or physical education.*
- 1. Such instruction should encourage sexual abstinence outside of marriage, and such instruction shall not include religious beliefs, practices in human sexuality, nor the subjective moral and ethical judgments of the instructor or other persons.*
 - 2. No such instruction shall be offered in kindergarten or in grades one through six, except that the Orleans Parish School Board may offer instruction in sex education at the third grade level or higher.*
 - 3. When offered, such instruction shall be available also to special education students at age-appropriate levels.*
 - 4. Any student may be excused from receiving instruction in sex education at the option and discretion of his or her parent or guardian according to procedures provided by the LEA. Such instruction may be offered at times other than during the regular school day, as determined by the LEA.*
 - 5. An LEA that chooses to offer instruction in sex education shall provide the following information to the parents and/or guardians of the students:*
 - a. a description of the course contents;*
 - b. a listing of course materials to be used; and*
 - c. the qualifications of the instructor(s).*
- E. All books, films, and other materials to be used in instruction in sex education shall be submitted to and approved by the local educational governing authority and by a parental review committee, whose membership shall be determined by such board.*

Health Education

Per BESE Bulletin 741, §2313, students in elementary and middle school shall receive instruction that provides a foundation in fundamentals of the language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health, physical education, and cultural arts.

Students in high school must take a half (½) unit of health education to fulfill graduation requirements. Per state law, health education shall include instruction relative to dating violence. Such instruction shall include, but need not be limited to, providing students with the definition of “dating violence,” dating violence warning signs, and characteristics of healthy relationships.

Recommendations and Conclusion

LDOE, DCFS, and DHH are committed to providing comprehensive education and services to youth in Louisiana through a wide variety of programming across the departments and state. Programming reaches a significant number of youth and works to address Louisiana’s declining, but still relative high rates of teen pregnancies, while following currently legal requirements. LDE, DHH, and DCFS held meetings on November 5, 2014 and January 28, 2015 to discuss and evaluate the programs already existing in the state. As a result of these meetings, the departments make the following recommendations to address teen pregnancy and STI rates in Louisiana:

1. Continue to provide information to local school districts and communities on trusted resources available;
2. Continue tracking pertinent data to identify high risk areas to which resources can be directed;
3. Support parents and local partners (including schools, organizations, faith-based institutions, community leaders, and non-traditional partners) in instituting evidence-based best practices and to pursue community-oriented solutions— in order to gain local buy in and increase efficacy;
4. Work on the development of community network pilots and see how they can be implemented in other areas of the state.

It is hoped these recommendations and this shared information helps frame the realities and challenges as the departments continue their work on these issues.