



Ben Springgate MD, MPH has expanded his role in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to serve as Senior Physician Executive and Senior Policy Advisor. As part of this transition, Dr. Springgate also will serve as Chief Medical Officer and Medical Director for Louisiana Medicaid (Bureau of Health Services Financing), overseeing a team of physicians working to improve the effectiveness of Medicaid in Louisiana. Dr. Springgate will continue to support the Department and the Deputy Secretary on diverse matters of health policy, including value-based care, healthcare workforce, addiction care, and overdose reduction.

Dr. Springgate serves as Professor and Chief of Community and Population Medicine; Director of the Center for Healthcare Value and Effectiveness; and Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs for the Department of Medicine, at LSU Health-New Orleans, where he has been on faculty for more than 10 years. A practicing internal medicine and addiction specialist, Dr. Springgate co-founded the LSU Integrated Health Clinic - the first and largest academic primary care center in Louisiana focused on caring for patients with opioid use disorder, addictions, and related health concerns. Dr. Springgate directs the MD/MPH Dual Degree Program at LSU. In the policy arena, Dr. Springgate previously served as a Fellow in CMS' Center for Clinical Standards and Quality; as a Health and Aging Policy Fellow in the United States Senate; and as Chief Health Officer for the New Orleans Public Schools.

Dr. Springgate grew up in New Orleans, and attended medical school, public health school, and residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at Tulane University. He completed 3 years of advanced study in health services and health policy in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program at UCLA, before joining faculty at Tulane School of Medicine and the RAND Corporation.

Dr. Springgate, his wife, and three children enjoy playing soccer, spending time with family, and watching LSU and Saints football.



Dr. Kathleen Willis has over 20 years of leadership in healthcare delivery, quality improvement, and medical management. A Louisiana native, she received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans, where she also completed her Internal Medicine Residency and served as Chief Resident. Dr. Willis is a graduate of the LSU-HCSD Leadership Academy and completed the Advisory Board Company Fellowship in Washington, DC, further enhancing her expertise in healthcare strategy and management.

Dr. Willis recently accepted the position of Associate Medical Director for Louisiana Medicaid with LDH in May 2025. In this role, Dr. Willis oversees benefits and covered services, leads quality improvement programs, and provides clinical consultation as needed.

Before assuming her current role, Dr. Willis served as Medical Director for one of Louisiana's largest Medicaid Managed Care Organizations, where she oversaw quality of care, utilization management, and case management for Medicaid enrollees. Her prior experience also includes serving as Associate Chief Medical Officer for the LSU Health Care Services Division and Medical Director of Lallie Kemp Medical Center. During her tenure with LSU, she led a range of initiatives to improve health outcomes, including the design and implementation of healthcare effectiveness programs focused on population health and chronic disease management. She also led the system-wide Patient Centered Medical Home Collaborative and played a key role in launching and expanding telemedicine services across the network.

Dr. Willis has a strong interest in health policy and values collaboration with stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that enhance healthcare delivery and improve outcomes across diverse populations. She has held community leadership roles, including service on the Louisiana Legislative Telehealth Task Force, and has been recognized with multiple awards for her contributions to healthcare leadership and quality improvement. In addition to her leadership work, Dr. Willis has presented at both state and national medical conferences on critical topics such as patient safety. Her academic contributions include published research on patient-centered medical homes and healthcare effectiveness.