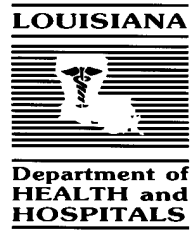




M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS



David W. Hood
SECRETARY

May 2, 2000

Dear Fellow Louisianians:

Over the years, we have noticed that more and more individuals and communities are working towards improving their health and quality of life. As the government agency charged with collecting and providing health information for the citizens of this state, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health has published the *Parish Health Profiles 1999* to assist communities in that work.

Do you know which diseases, deaths and injuries are preventable? How healthy are the children of Louisiana? What factors impact the health and quality of life of your community? How can you and your neighbors plan for a brighter and healthier future?

These are questions that people all over Louisiana are asking. We want to assure you that we are working to provide answers and promote healthy people in healthy communities. Now more than ever we have the ability to obtain and share a wealth of information not just about health but about factors that make health possible, such as education, economy, the environment and opportunities for recreation. Thanks to developing partnerships with agencies and coalitions across the state that collect these quality of life indicators, we can provide you with a more complete picture of your parish.

This profile is a starting point for your work. It is intended to provide information about quality of life and to help you ask more questions. Like the communities and individuals whose stories are told here, you will be developing innovative solutions to the challenges that face us. The work of public health in Louisiana has a long history of innovation, and we welcome you to become a part of that history. May these *Parish Health Profiles 1999* help us all in the pursuit of a healthier Louisiana.

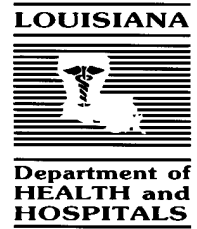
Sincerely,

David W Hood
Secretary



M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS



David W. Hood
SECRETARY

April 14, 2000

Dear Readers:

I am very proud to introduce to you the *Parish Health Profiles 1999*. This book represents the dedicated work of all our public health staff – sanitarians, doctors, nurses and the wide variety of professionals involved in creating a healthier Louisiana. It also represents the work of community members who, by their passion for local health and quality of life, are strengthening and expanding the work of public health.

The Office of Public Health (OPH) has historically been charged with the protection of the health and quality of life of citizens through the prevention of epidemics and the spread of disease, protection against environmental hazards, prevention of injuries, promotion of healthy behaviors, response to disasters and assurance of quality and accessible health services. In order to carry out these responsibilities, OPH collects, analyzes and disseminates information about health status and the factors that affect health. In response to the demand from communities that are taking responsibility for local health, we are also providing information on quality of life factors such as crime, economy, education and opportunities for cultural and recreational experience. We are able to provide this information through our growing partnerships with other state agencies, organizations and coalitions.

I also want to welcome you to a new age of information. We are now able to get information faster, and it is more accessible at local levels than ever before. I urge all readers to take advantage of one of the greatest information resources we have available – the internet. These *Profiles*, along with most of DHH's informational reports are available on our website: <http://www.dhh.state.la.us>. Many of the agencies we have partnered with here, both state and national, also have vast archives of information online. I urge you to familiarize yourself with those resources. Information is power – the power to improve community quality of life and to carry out the work of public health here in Louisiana.

Please let us know how well this publication has served you and yours by completing the evaluation form. Your feedback is a valuable component of our commitment to serve you. I can promise you that OPH will continue be your partner in this endeavor, dedicated as we are to our mission – but the true heart of this work lies in communities across Louisiana. I wish you the best of luck.

Sincerely,

Madeline McAndrew
Assistant Secretary