


Information Sharing within LDH

	Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)	
	Policy Number	15.1
	Content	LDH policy on sharing information within the department
	Effective Date	September 10, 2006
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LDH is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion. Our human capital is the most valuable asset we have. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities and talent that our employees invest in their work represents a significant part of not only our culture, but our Department's reputation and achievement as well.

If there is a discrepancy between an LDH Policy and a Program Office or facility policy, the LDH policy shall govern/override/supersede the conflicting section within the Program Office or facility policy.

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

In the provision of services and supports to the citizens of Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Health is a single state agency. While individual offices, divisions and bureaus within the Department provide services and supports in specialized areas or through specific funding streams, state law recognizes the Department as a unified body and authorizes the Secretary to implement policies for the administration, control and operation of its functions, programs and affairs.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Louisiana Department of Health that information gathered in the conduct of departmental business be responsibly shared among LDH offices, divisions and bureaus, and local governance entities providing human services for the purpose of describing, evaluating and improving the quality and efficiency of operations.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all information gathered, including that collected in the applicant process and in the provision of support or services to individuals, except where state or federal law prohibits such. In every case, the privacy of the individual will be respected and the sharing process designed to comply with HIPAA and other legal requirements for confidentiality.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this policy is September 10, 2006.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Office of Management and Finance shall provide leadership, centralized technological support, and technical assistance to LDH entities to facilitate and support information sharing and to evaluate and interpret data, insofar as resources are available. In order to support these efforts, the various offices, divisions and bureaus within LDH may be required to allocate staff time, positions or funding on a case-by-case, time-limited basis as negotiated with the Undersecretary and approved by the Undersecretary and/or Deputy Secretary.
- B. The Office of Management and Finance shall develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.
- C. The appointing authorities of the Louisiana Department of Health shall review all state laws impacting information sharing within the department, identify any impediments to such and develop proposed legislation to remove or mitigate such impediments. When entities within the department are called upon to propose draft legislation, such legislation should facilitate and not hinder information sharing. Appointing authorities are the officers and employees authorized by statute or by lawfully delegated authority to make appointments to positions in the State Service.
- D. The appointing authorities within the Louisiana Department of Health shall review and amend all policies, procedures and processes within their scope of authority in order to facilitate and ease information sharing within the department. In this context each appointing authority shall assume that other appointing authorities in LDH will treat shared data in a highly confidential manner. Policies, procedures and processes should be designed to facilitate and not hinder information sharing. Appointing authorities are the officers and employees authorized by statute or by lawfully delegated authority to make appointments to positions in the State Service.

- E. All LDH offices, divisions and bureaus shall be responsible for developing and/or maintaining data dictionaries for each data base created under its authority, whether maintained internally or by a contractor. Such data dictionaries shall be provided to the Office of Management and Finance in a form and manner specified by that Office. Data dictionaries shall be maintained for the life of the corresponding database.
- F. In accordance with LDH Policies, the confidentiality of all individuals applying for or receiving treatment, services or supports from LDH shall be maintained. When information is shared for the purpose of coordinating an individual plan, use of such information shall be limited to those individuals directly involved in such treatment plan. When other purposes are intended, unique identifiers shall be assigned to individual records and all identifying information stripped as soon as reliable cross-matches are made. Data shall be aggregated at the first opportunity.
- G. Interpretation of data acquired from other offices/divisions/bureaus shall not be pursued in isolation. Each entity providing information shall be included in the interpretation of data that has been cross-matched. Disagreements among entities shall be mediated by the Undersecretary in consultation with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.
- H. No data or reports developed from shared information shall be released to other state agencies or to the public without the consensus of the sharing entities or approval of the Secretary or the Secretary's designee.

V. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision
September 10, 2006	Policy created
July 19, 2019	Policy reviewed