



The Governor's Office of
DRUG POLICY

DRUG POLICY BOARD

END-OF-YEAR REPORT

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Prepared by the Governor's Office of Drug Policy
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About the Governor's Office of Drug Policy

VISION

To recognize alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse as serious social and public health issues -- and, by addressing them, to build a climate of health and wellness across Louisiana.

MISSION

To identify challenges around substance misuse, and to recommend programs, policies, and practices that sustain prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts.

The Office of Drug Policy in Louisiana is part of the Governor's Office and is established under Louisiana Revised Statutes § 49:219.2. This statute creates the Drug Policy Board as a body corporate operating within the Governor's Office to address substance abuse prevention, treatment, and enforcement.

What the Office Does

The Office of Drug Policy carries out five core functions:

- **Tracks the landscape.** Monitors drug trends, develops policy position statements for the Governor and Executive Team, and tracks relevant legislation.
- **Runs the boards.** Manages day-to-day operations for five boards and commissions (detailed below).
- **Implements the strategic plan.** Writes and regularly updates the Louisiana Substance Misuse Prevention Strategic Plan -- the state's four-year plan, built on data.
- **Supports federal funding.** Backs the federally funded LA Partnerships for Success III grant program, awarded to the Louisiana Department of Health's Office of Behavioral Health.
- **Connect the dots.** Researches and educates on how substance misuse, mental health, and suicide intersect, to strengthen prevention efforts overall.

Staff

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Introduction

The Governor's Office of Drug Policy presents this End-of-Year Report covering July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. This report reflects a year of continued progress in Louisiana's coordinated response to substance misuse, impaired driving, and behavioral health, carried out through the work of the Drug Policy Board and its supporting committees and task forces.

Throughout the year, these bodies brought together state agencies, law enforcement, the judiciary, healthcare providers, educators, and community partners to review emerging substance use trends, strengthen prevention and enforcement efforts, and advance data-informed legislation. Notable accomplishments included the codification of the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving into state law, passage of new legislation addressing DWI penalties and substance use disorder screening, and continued statewide declines in drug-involved overdose deaths.

The sections that follow summarize the work of each committee during the year, including key presentations, legislative developments, and accomplishments.

Statutory Foundation

The Governor's Office of Drug Policy and every board and body it oversees are established and governed by Louisiana law. The following statutes, acts, and bylaws define not only that these entities exist, but precisely what work they are required to perform, how often they must meet, and what they must produce.

Drug Policy Board -- La. R.S. 49:219.1-219.4 (as amended by Act 78 of 2025)

Established by the Legislature in 1990 (Acts 1990, No. 1029), the Drug Policy Board is the oldest and senior-most entity within the Office of Drug Policy, codified at La. R.S. 49:219.1 through 219.4, as most recently amended by Act 78 of the 2025 Regular Session (HB 316).

Policy Statement (R.S. 49:219.1)

It is the policy of the state to take every responsible action, explore all opportunities, invite meaningful contributions, and utilize all available resources to eliminate substance and alcohol misuse along with the resulting harm to individuals and institutions.

Statutory Powers and Duties (R.S. 49:219.3)

Under state law, the Drug Policy Board is required to perform all of the following:

- **(1)** Identify, examine, select or develop, recommend or implement drug control policies and strategies to more effectively combat illegal drugs and substance and alcohol misuse.
- **(2)** Stress a coordinated approach emphasizing application, or needed revisions, of enforcement capabilities targeting drug misuse, sale, and supply.
- **(3)** Identify, examine, select or develop, recommend or implement demand reduction measures such as education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, peer support, harm reduction, and public awareness.
- **(4)** Receive reports of the allocations and expenditures of all substance misuse funds earmarked for education, treatment, rehabilitation, prevention, and law enforcement.
- **(5)** Evaluate how state and federal funds are utilized in implementing substance use prevention and related programs at the state and local agencies.
- **(6)** Evaluate changes in the methods and priorities of the allocation of funds to state and local agencies.
- **(7)** Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of state and local public awareness, prevention, and harm reduction programs addressing substance use in both the public and private sectors.
- **(8)** Evaluate challenges related to the enforcement of substance use laws and make recommendations to enhance effectiveness through legislative updates or executive action.
- **(9)** Assess the roles and interaction of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and operations in combating substance misuse and trafficking.
- **(10)** Provide an annual report to the governor by July first of each year and submit quarterly reports if deemed necessary.
- **(11)** Develop long and short range plans or strategies that prioritize areas of need or otherwise organize the use of resources.
- **(12)** Seek assistance or support from any state agency or private sector entity which may be helpful in diminishing or eradicating substance and alcohol misuse.
- **(13)** Adopt and promulgate rules as may be necessary to implement provisions of this Part.

Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving -- La. R.S. 49:219.1.1-219.1.4 (Act 651 of 2026)

The Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving was codified into state law during the 2026 Regular Session through House Bill 492, enacted as Act 651. It is established as a body corporate within the Office of the Governor, composed of 23 members.

Statutory Powers and Duties (R.S. 49:219.1.3)

- (1) Address the high incidence of driving while impaired by alcohol, drugs, or a combination, including data collection and analysis related to impaired driving arrest, prosecution and conviction rates.
- (2) Identify and implement effective impaired driving countermeasures, including substance use assessment and treatment, electronic monitoring, ignition interlock devices, sanctions, and other evidence-based strategies.
- (3) Analyze data trends related to alcohol-involved, drug-involved, and polysubstance-involved fatal or serious injury motor vehicle crashes.
- (4) Solicit input and recommendations from agencies involved in impaired driving enforcement, prevention, adjudication, and countermeasures at the state, parish, and local levels.
- (5) Conduct regular analysis and assessment of Louisiana's impaired driving statutes and recommend changes as needed.
- (6) Evaluate changes in the methods or priorities of the allocation of funds to state and local agencies.
- (7) Align priorities to support the Louisiana Statewide Impaired Driving Plan.
- (8) Act in an advisory capacity to the governor, the Governor's Office of Drug Policy, the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, the office of alcohol and tobacco control, and the office of behavioral health of the Louisiana Department of Health.
- (9) Assess the roles and interaction of federal, state, and local partners involved in impaired driving enforcement and adjudication.
- (10) Provide an annual report to the governor by February first of each year.
- (11) Develop long or short range plans, or both, or strategies that prioritize areas of need or otherwise organize the use of resources.
- (12) Seek assistance or support from any state agency or private sector entity that may be helpful in preventing, reducing, or mitigating impaired driving.
- (13) Adopt and promulgate rules as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Part.

Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE Council) -- La. R.S. 49:219.5

The HOPE Council was established under Act 88 of the 2017 Legislative Session (La. R.S. 49:219.5, as amended by Act 147 of 2024). It was created by the Drug Policy Board to coordinate resources and expertise in support of a statewide response to the opioid and heroin crisis. The Council meets at least quarterly.

Interagency Coordination Plan (R.S. 49:219.5(D) and (E))

The HOPE Council is required by law to establish an Interagency Heroin and Opioid Coordination Plan, submitted annually by March 15 to the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

- Parish-level data on opioid overdoses and the dispensing of overdose-reversal medication.
- Progress of current initiatives in the state relating to the heroin and opioid epidemic.
- Specific impacts to agencies in addressing education, treatment including medication-assisted treatment, prevention, overdose, and recovery.

Prevention Systems Committee -- La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3); PSC Bylaws (Revised September 2018)

The Prevention Systems Committee (PSC) is a standing advisory committee of the Drug Policy Board, composed of up to 35 members from state agencies, law enforcement, public health, higher education, and community organizations.

Member Roles and Responsibilities (PSC Bylaws, Article V)

- The PSC works in consultation and cooperation with the SEW to advise and make recommendations to the Drug Policy Board on issues relating to programs, policies, and practices.
- The PSC takes data analyzed by the SEW on substance use trends and uses it to develop public awareness content including policy briefs, one-pagers, and prevention recommendations.

State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) -- La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3); SEW Bylaws (Updated December 2021)

The SEW is a standing advisory committee of the Drug Policy Board, institutionalized December 2004, composed of up to 30 members representing state-level agencies, organizations, and institutions with expertise in collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and promoting the use of data related to behavioral health.

Member Roles and Responsibilities (SEW Bylaws, Article V)

- The SEW tracks and analyzes data on substance use trends to ground policy in evidence. That data is provided to the Prevention Systems Committee, which uses it to develop public awareness content, policy briefs, and one-pagers.
- Appointed members adhere to the Roles and Responsibilities outlined in the State Epidemiology Workgroup Cooperative Involvement Agreement.

How the Boards Fit Together

The Governor's Office of Drug Policy oversees five statutory bodies organized in a hub-and-spoke structure: the Governor's Office of Drug Policy sits at the top, the Drug Policy Board serves as the coordinating hub, and four statutory bodies established in law report their findings back up to the hub.

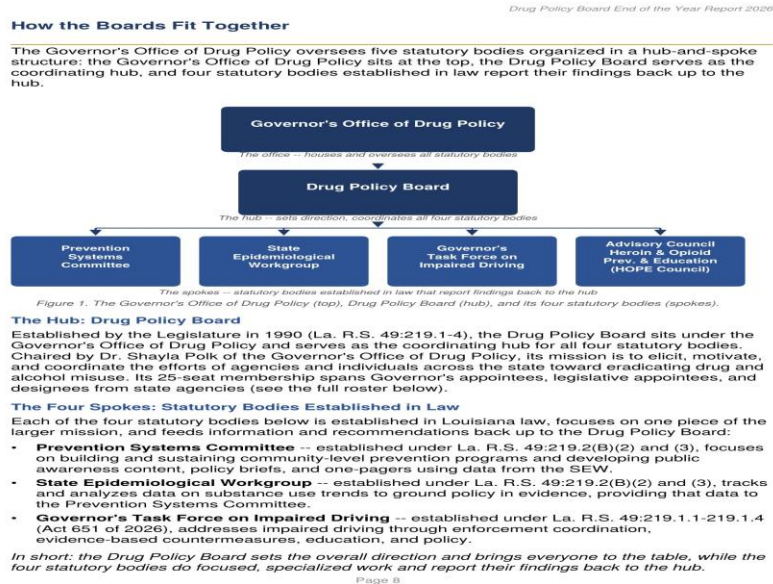


Figure 1. The Governor's Office of Drug Policy (top), Drug Policy Board (hub), and its four statutory bodies (spokes).

The Hub: Drug Policy Board

Established by the Legislature in 1990 (La. R.S. 49:219.1-4), the Drug Policy Board serves as the coordinating hub for all four statutory bodies. Its 25-seat membership spans Governor's appointees, legislative appointees, and designees from state agencies.

The Four Spokes: Statutory Bodies Established in Law

- **Prevention Systems Committee** -- established under La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3), focuses on building and sustaining community-level prevention programs.
- **State Epidemiological Workgroup** -- established under La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3), tracks and analyzes data on substance use trends to ground policy in evidence.
- **Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving** -- established under La. R.S. 49:219.1.1-219.1.4 (Act 651 of 2026), addresses impaired driving through enforcement coordination and policy.
- **Advisory Council on Heroin & Opioid Prevention & Education (HOPE Council)** -- established under La. R.S. 49:219.5, concentrates specifically on the opioid and heroin crisis, from prevention to education.

In short: the Drug Policy Board sets the overall direction and brings everyone to the table, while the four statutory bodies do focused, specialized work and report their findings back to the hub.

Louisiana Partnerships for Success III (LaPFS III)

The Office of Drug Policy continues to partner with the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health (LDH-OBH), in supporting the implementation of the Louisiana Partnerships for Success III (LaPFS III) initiative. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), LaPFS III is a statewide prevention initiative that utilizes evidence-based strategies and the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) to reduce underage drinking and other substance misuse among Louisiana's youth while strengthening community prevention systems.

Through this collaborative partnership, the Office of Drug Policy works alongside LDH-OBH to advance statewide prevention priorities by supporting community coalitions, promoting public awareness, strengthening cross-agency collaboration, and aligning prevention efforts across state and local partners.

LaPFS III also emphasizes building sustainable prevention infrastructure by enhancing community capacity, supporting evidence-based prevention programming, utilizing data to guide decision-making, and fostering long-term collaboration among state agencies, local organizations, and prevention stakeholders. Together, the Office of Drug Policy and LDH-OBH remain committed to creating healthier, safer, and more resilient communities through comprehensive substance misuse prevention efforts.

The LaPFS III initiative addresses the significant challenges many Louisianans ages 12-25 face regarding substance misuse. LaPFS III targets four communities across the state in identified regions that present higher rates of use when compared to the state in underage drinking and polysubstance use. Through evidence-based prevention strategies, the initiative aims to reduce substance misuse and strengthen protective factors among youth and young adults.

LaPFS III Target Parishes

- Lafourche
- St. Mary
- Washington
- Livingston

Office of Drug Policy Participation in the Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act

The Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act is a federal model law developed by the Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA) with support from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. It provides a framework for states to create a dedicated agency to coordinate and oversee drug control policy across enforcement, prevention, education, treatment, and recovery.

The Governor's Office of Drug Policy, under the leadership of Executive Director Dr. Shayla Polk, played an active role in shaping the Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act, published by LAPPA in February 2026.

Dr. Polk served as a member of the national working group convened to develop the model, representing Louisiana alongside drug policy office representatives from Ohio, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Iowa, and Arkansas. Louisiana's own statutory framework (La. R.S. 49:219.1 et seq.) served as one of the key source laws drawn upon in drafting the model legislation.

The model legislation provides other states with a template for establishing a centralized office of drug control policy.

Drug Policy Board Membership

The Drug Policy Board has 25 seats, each tied to a specific agency, appointing authority, or qualification rather than to an individual by name. All 25 seats are currently filled. The seats are:

Ex Officio (Agency Heads or Designees)	
1	The Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health or his designee.
2	The Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections or his designee.
3	The Superintendent of State Police or his designee.
4	The Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or his designee.
5	The Executive Director of the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement or his designee.
6	The Superintendent of Education or his designee.
7	The Commander in Chief of the National Guard or his designee.
8	The Attorney General or his designee.
9	A representative of a federal agency with responsibilities in alcohol and drug abuse education, treatment, or prevention.
10	The Commissioner of Alcohol and Tobacco Control or his designee.
11	The Director, or his designee, of the Office of Drug Policy within the Office of the Governor.
12	A member of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission.
13	A member of the Board of Pharmacy.
14	A representative of the Board of Regents specializing in collegiate recovery education and behavioral health services.
15	An individual who has been in recovery for at least five years and is actively engaged in substance use prevention and peer support efforts.
Legislative Appointees	
16	A member of the House Committee on Health and Welfare as designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
17	A member of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare as designated by the President of the Senate.
Governor's Appointees	
18	A representative of a private or nonprofit organization located within this state providing substance use education, treatment, and prevention.
19	The President or a representative of the District Attorneys Association.
20	The Director of the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office or his designee.
21	The President or a representative of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association.
22	A representative of the indigent defender system.
23	A district court judge.
24	A representative from the alcohol industry.
25	A physician representing substance misuse treatment or substance misuse prevention.

Drug Policy Board

The Drug Policy Board is the central statutory body within the Governor's Office of Drug Policy, bringing together members and stakeholders representing law enforcement, public health, education, judiciary, and community organizations. The Board met four times during 2025-2026.

July 31, 2025

The Board's third quarterly meeting featured a presentation from ATC Commissioner Ernest Legier on the regulatory landscape for hemp-derived and CBD products in Louisiana. Dr. Shayla Polk reviewed legislation enacted during the 2025 Regular Session affecting hemp products, synthetic substances, alternative nicotine products, drug paraphernalia, nitrous oxide, and kratom.

October 23, 2025

The Board included presentations on Kiki's Red Ribbon School Celebration reaching over 10,000 Louisiana students; Livingston Parish Public Schools' use of opioid abatement funding; and the iBac mobile alcohol monitoring platform. The Louisiana Department of Health presented finalized 2024 overdose data showing a 31% statewide decline in drug-involved deaths. The Board voted to support codifying the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving into state law.

January 22, 2026

Dr. Shayla Polk reviewed 2025 Governor's Office of Drug Policy activities and previewed the upcoming youth conference scheduled for June 2026. Norma DuBois presented proposed revisions to R.S. 14:334 and related impaired-driving statutes for the 2026 Legislative Session.

April 23, 2026

The Board received a legislative update from Dr. Shayla Polk and discussed the Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act. The primary presentation addressed emerging drug trends among Louisiana youth, highlighting nicotine vaping and pouches, high-potency cannabis, fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills, and emerging substances including Delta-8 and synthetic THC.

2025 Legislative Highlights

Kratom Becomes a Controlled Substance -- Senate Bill 154 (Act 41), Effective August 1, 2025

Senate Bill 154 (Act 41) classified kratom as a controlled substance in Louisiana. The Drug Policy Board monitored and supported the legislation as part of its commitment to addressing emerging substance use issues.

Strengthening the Drug Policy Board -- House Bill 316 (Act 78), Effective August 1, 2025

House Bill 316 (Act 78) strengthened the Louisiana Drug Policy Board by expanding its membership and enhancing its statutory responsibilities. The legislation expanded membership to include additional perspectives from collegiate recovery, behavioral health, the recovery community, the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office, and private or nonprofit organizations providing substance use prevention, treatment, or education services.

Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving Membership

The Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving has 23 seats, established under La. R.S. 49:219.1.2 (Act 651 of 2026). All 23 seats are currently filled.

Members (R.S. 49:219.1.2)	
1	Attorney General (or designee)
2	One member of the House of Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House
3	One member of the Senate designated by the President of the Senate
4	Commissioner, Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (or designee)
5	Commissioner, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Office of Motor Vehicles (or designee)
6	Executive Director, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (serves as Chairman)
7	Assistant Secretary, Office of Behavioral Health, Louisiana Department of Health (or designee)
8	Representative of DPS&C, Office of State Police, designated by the Superintendent
9	Director, Office of Drug Policy within the Office of the Governor
10	Representative of the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory
11	Secretary, Department of Transportation and Development (or designee)
12	Commissioner, Louisiana Department of Insurance (or designee)
13	Representative of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association
14	Representative of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association
15	Representative of the Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police
16	Representative of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (Louisiana State Office)
17	Representative of the Louisiana Restaurant Association
18	Director, Louisiana Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office (or designee)
19	Representative of the American Automobile Association, specializing in roadside assistance and impaired driving prevention
20	At-large member appointed by the Governor (at least one must be a victim or family member of a victim of impaired driving)
21	At-large member appointed by the Governor
22	At-large member appointed by the Governor
23	At-large member appointed by the Governor

Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving

The Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving, chaired by Lisa Freeman, Executive Director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, coordinates statewide efforts to reduce impaired driving. The Task Force met four times during 2025-2026.

August 6, 2025

Lisa Freeman reviewed legislative updates on remote alcohol monitoring devices, expanded liability for adults who facilitate underage alcohol access, the hands-free driving law, and the state's new kratom ban. The Task Force voted unanimously to support a resolution codifying the Task Force into Louisiana law.

November 19, 2025

Dr. Helmut Schneider of LSU's Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety presented the economic and societal cost of impaired driving in Louisiana. Each workgroup provided a year-end report-out, covering data gaps, recommended legislative changes, the Ignition Interlock Reference Guide, and a new youth impaired driving education video.

February 11, 2026

Baton Rouge Police Sergeant Jason Martin shared his personal experience as a victim of impaired driving. Luke Niforatos of Smart Approaches to Marijuana discussed risks associated with marijuana legalization, and the LSP Crime Lab presented data on evolving cannabis products and impaired driving.

May 13, 2026

The Task Force featured presentations on Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training from Wildlife and Fisheries, the role of the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, and judicial education efforts. Workgroup 4 reported that House Bills 69 and 82, along with the substance use disorder screening bill, had successfully passed the legislature.

Legislative Accomplishments -- 2026 Session

Codification of the Task Force (HB 492). Established the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving in state law.

Judge Jules Edwards III Impaired Driving Prevention Act (SB 118 / Act 212). Requires substance use disorder screenings for individuals convicted of first- and second-offense DWI.

HB 69 (Act 49). Expands and clarifies ignition interlock device requirements following a DWI conviction.

HB 82 (Act 117). Increases penalties for repeat DWI offenders.

Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE Council) Membership

The HOPE Council consists of 13 voting members (La. R.S. 49:219.5). The Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health (or designee) serves as Chairman.

Voting Members (R.S. 49:219.5(B))	
1	Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health (or designee) -- Chairman
2	Secretary, Department of Children and Family Services (or designee)
3	State Superintendent of Education (or designee)
4	Secretary, Department of Public Safety and Corrections (or designee)
5	Superintendent of State Police (or designee)
6	Commissioner of Higher Education (or designee)
7	Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs (or designee)
8	Secretary, Louisiana Works (or designee)
9	President of the Senate (or designee)
10	Speaker of the House of Representatives (or designee)
11	Attorney General (or designee)
12	Commissioner of Insurance (or designee)
13	Judge from a drug division of a district court, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court

Of-Council Stakeholders (R.S. 49:219.5(C))	
1	Louisiana Board of Pharmacy
2	Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners
3	Louisiana Sheriffs' Association
4	Louisiana District Attorneys Association
5	Louisiana State Medical Society
6	Chiropractic Association of Louisiana
7	Louisiana Physical Therapy Association
8	Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police
9	Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association
10	Louisiana State Nurses Association
11	Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners
12	Louisiana Ambulance Alliance
13	Louisiana State Board of Nursing
14	Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association
15	Louisiana Poison Control Center
16	Louisiana-Mississippi Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
17	Optometry Association of Louisiana
18	Louisiana Association of Health Plans
19	Louisiana State Coroners Association

Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Council

The HOPE Advisory Council brings together state agencies, healthcare providers, and community partners to address opioid and substance use disorder. The Council held quarterly meetings throughout 2025-2026; minutes from the July 2025, October 2025, and January 2026 meetings are summarized below.

July 10, 2025

Dr. Mishka Terplan of the Friends Research Institute presented on substance use disorder and pregnancy, emphasizing universal voluntary screening. Carrie Templeton introduced Project M.O.M., a new initiative aimed at reducing opioid overdose deaths among pregnant and postpartum women. The Office of Behavioral Health presented on the Louisiana Crisis Response System and the 988 Lifeline.

October 9, 2025

Presenters from the La Bridge program described embedding substance use navigators in hospital emergency departments, connecting over 1,800 patients to treatment across four hospital systems. Tranettea Williams of the Louisiana Opioid Surveillance Program reported a 31% decline in drug-involved deaths statewide in 2024.

January 29, 2026

Dana Wilkoz, a Public Health Analyst with the CDC Foundation Overdose Response Strategy, presented on the ORS program in Louisiana. Curtis Nelson presented on the structure and use of opioid settlement funds through the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Administration Corporation.

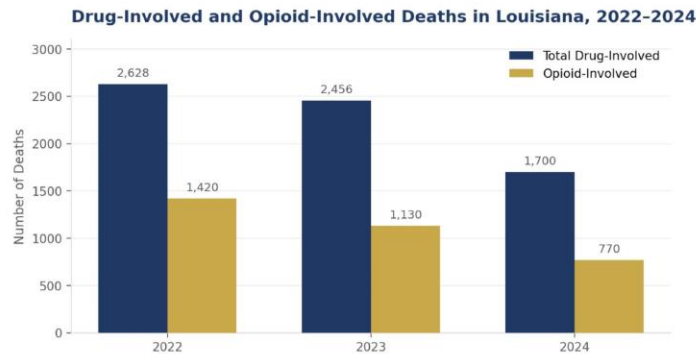
2025 HOPE Year-End Report Summary

The HOPE Council's 2025 Year-End Report was finalized on March 4, 2026, marking the Council's eighth full year of operation. The report compiles national, state, and parish-level overdose data; Medicaid treatment impacts; national and state initiatives; and recommendations for the year ahead.

Key Findings and Trends

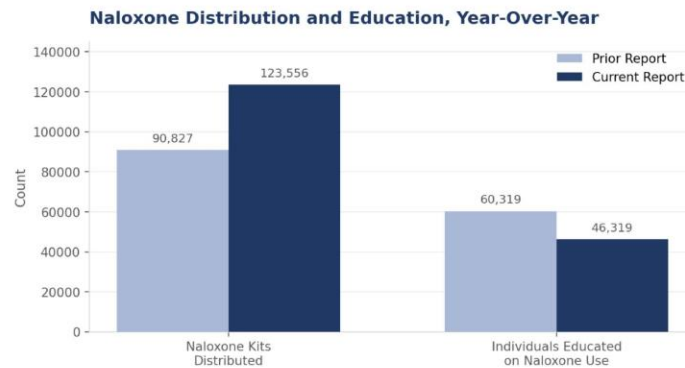
Nationally, drug overdose deaths decreased to 80,856 for the 12-month period ending December 2024, a 24.5% decline from the prior year. In Louisiana, drug overdose deaths decreased by 33.3% to 1,503. Louisiana's own surveillance data recorded 770 opioid-involved deaths in 2024, a 31.8% decrease from 2023. The five parishes with the highest numbers of opioid-involved deaths in 2024 were Jefferson, St. Tammany, Livingston, Rapides, and Lafayette. 123,556 naloxone kits were distributed statewide.

Figure 2. Opioid-involved deaths in Louisiana, 2016–2024.



Source: Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance System (LODSS)

Figure 3. Drug-involved and opioid-involved deaths in Louisiana, 2022–2024.



Source: LDH Office of Public Health and Office of Behavioral Health (LaSOR Grant / SAPT-BG)

Figure 4. Naloxone kits distributed and individuals educated, year-over-year.

National and State Initiatives

The HOPE Year-End Report highlights the DEA's 2025 telemedicine rules expanding flexibility for prescribing buprenorphine, the December 2025 reauthorization of the SUPPORT Act, and the Presidential Administration's Statement of Drug Policy Priorities. At the state level, the report details the continued rollout of Project MOM, the statewide expansion of the Louisiana Bridge program following Region 5's success in reducing opioid overdose deaths by 35%, progress on the OUD/SUD Reentry 1115 Demonstration Waiver, and continued LDH efforts to address buprenorphine stocking barriers at the pharmacy level.

2026 Recommendations

- Support buprenorphine access by addressing barriers encountered at the pharmacy level.
- Support the development of mobile dosing units by opioid treatment programs.
- Expand La Bridge in Louisiana emergency departments and hospitals.
- Support implementation of Project MOM.

- Diversify naloxone funding.
- Extend the shelf-life and expiration date of naloxone.
- Support expansion of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics to integrate SUD treatment within outpatient primary and specialty care.
- Support implementation of the 1115 Re-entry Waiver.

The full 2025 HOPE Year-End Report is available at www.la.gov/hope.

Prevention Systems Committee

The Prevention Systems Committee (PSC), co-chaired by Catherine Childers and Dr. Murelle Harrison, is one of the two advisory committees of the Drug Policy Board, responsible for reviewing data and developing policy and program recommendations on emerging substance use trends. Working in direct coordination with the State Epidemiological Workgroup, the PSC takes analyzed data on substance use trends and develops public awareness content including policy briefs and one-pagers for stakeholders and communities. The committee met four times during 2025-2026.

As of the preparation of this report, the minutes from the Committee's June 2026 meeting had not yet been approved by the Board.

September 3, 2025

Dr. Shayla Polk led discussion on developing a public awareness brief on THC seltzers, an emerging beverage category popular with younger consumers. The committee also discussed nicotine sachets as an emerging youth concern. Members agreed to coordinate messaging with the Task Force's Workgroup 4 to avoid duplicative outreach.

December 3, 2025

The committee revisited its purpose and history as one of two advisory bodies to the Drug Policy Board, and Dr. Polk reported she is developing the PSC's four-year strategic plan for 2026. Catherine Childers announced she would step down as co-chair later in 2026 and invited nominations for her successor.

March 26, 2026

The committee reviewed pending marijuana- and hemp-related legislation and discussed Senate Bill 118's substance use screening requirements for DWI offenders. Members were asked to submit priority topics for the committee's future agenda, including youth vaping, marijuana policy, and school-based prevention.

State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW)

The State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) serves as the data-collection counterpart to the Prevention Systems Committee. The SEW tracks and analyzes data on substance use trends to ground policy in evidence. The Workgroup met four times during the reporting period; minutes from the September 2025, November 2025, and February 2026 meetings are summarized below.

As of the preparation of this report, the minutes from the Workgroup's May 2026 meeting had not yet been approved by the Board.

September 3, 2025

The Workgroup continued discussion of leadership succession after reopening nominations for a vacant co-chair position. Catherine Childers summarized several bills passed during the 2025 Regular Session, including legislation placing kratom into Schedule I, effective August 1, 2025.

November 20, 2025

The Workgroup elected Dr. Emily Tilley of O'Brien House and Erin Pourciau Bradford of the East Baton Rouge Schools iCare Program as new Co-Chairs. Catherine Childers and Dr. Shayla Polk described a cross-collaboration between the Prevention Systems Committee and the Task Force's Workgroup 4 to develop dual-track messaging on emerging risks such as THC seltzers and concealed nicotine products.

February 26, 2026

Newly elected Co-Chairs Dr. Emily Tilley and Erin Pourciau Bradford led discussion on strategic priorities for 2026. Members discussed longstanding inconsistencies in coroner-level data across parishes, including limited toxicology detail and the absence of standardized reporting on contributing factors such as substance use in suicide deaths. Dr. Emily Tilley described a recent overdose case in which on-site coroner toxicology testing revealed fentanyl-contaminated methamphetamine. The Workgroup also received an update noting that Senator Boudreaux would author Senate Bill 118 to require substance use disorder screening for first- and second-offense DWI.

2026 Legislation Tracked and Monitored

These are the bills that were tracked and monitored by the Drug Policy Board during the reporting period. The Board reviewed legislation related to substance use prevention, treatment, recovery, criminal justice, public safety, and behavioral health.

2026 Regular Session Bill Tracking

Bills highlighted below were championed by the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving and its board members and were signed into law during the 2026 Regular Session by Governor Jeff Landry.

Bill #	Representative/Senator	Official Bill Title (2026 Regular Session)	Final Outcome
HB 51	Rep. Debbie Villio	BAIL: (Constitutional Amendment) Restricts post-conviction bail for certain offenders	Passed -- Act No. 271.
HB 52	Rep. Debbie Villio	CRIMINAL/PROCEDURE: Provides relative to trial of misdemeanors	Passed -- Act No. 192 (without Governor's signature).
HB 56	Rep. Debbie Villio	DWI: Provides relative to the imposition of fines for driving while impaired	Passed -- Act No. 8.
HB 69	Rep. Debbie Villio	DWI: Provides relative to ignition interlock device offenses	Passed -- Act No. 49.
HB 82	Rep. Debbie Villio	DWI: Provides relative to penalties for DWI offenses	Passed -- Act No. 117.
HB 84	Rep. Alonzo Knox	CRIME/FELONIES: Designates felony hit-and-run driving as a crime of violence	Did not become law.
HB 100	Rep. Dixon McMakin	CRIME: Creates the crime of felony speeding	Did not become law.
HB 152	Rep. Shane Mack	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES: Adds certain substances to the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law	Passed -- Act No. 58.
HB 159	Rep. Steven Jackson	CRIMINAL/SENTENCING: Creates a pretrial incarceration alternative pilot program in Caddo Parish	Passed -- Act No. 784.
HB 264	Rep. Brian Glorioso	DWI: Provides relative to operating a vehicle while intoxicated	Did not become law.
HB 302	Rep. Tehmi Chassion	TOBACCO/TOBACCO PRODUCTS: Prohibits the sale of vapor products near schools	Passed -- Act No. 792.
HB 352	Rep. Shane Mack	STUDENTS: Provides relative to behavioral health	Passed.
HB 392	Rep. Delisha Boyd	SCHOOLS: Provides relative to requirements for posting suicide hotline information on school websites and student ID cards	Passed -- Act No. 548.
HB 395	Rep. C. Denise Marcelle	SCHOOLS: Requires the state Department of Education to create a program to recruit, hire, and retain mental health professionals	Failed.
HB 492	Rep. Annie Spell	DWI: Creates the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving	Passed -- Act No. 651.
HB 539	Rep. John Ilg Jr.	HEALTH: Provides relative to consumable hemp products	Withdrawn/Did not become law.
HB 552	Rep. Marcus Bryant	DWI: Provides relative to driving while intoxicated	Passed -- Act No. 812.
HB 568	Rep. Gabe Firment	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES: Provides relative to penalty enhancements for violations of drug-free school zones	Passed -- Act No. 305.
HB 572	Rep. Shaun Mena	SCHOOLS: Creates the Resilient Youth and Trauma-Informed Schools Grant Pilot Program	Failed.
HB 626	Rep. Edmond Jordan	COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Provides relative to suicide prevention plans at colleges and universities	Passed -- Act No. 660.
HB 723	Rep. Dodie Horton	MTR VEHICLE/MOTORCYCLES: Authorizes drivers of certain two-wheeled vehicles to proceed through a red light under certain circumstances	Passed -- Act No. 951.

Bill #	Representative/Senator	Official Bill Title (2026 Regular Session)	Final Outcome
HB 733	Rep. Tammy Phelps	MTR VEHICLE/OFFICE: Provides relative to reinstatement fees for certain motor vehicle violations	Failed.
HB 778	Rep. Beryl Amedee	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES: Provides relative to the possession of kratom	Failed.
HB 782	Rep. Ken Brass	FEES/LICENSES/PERMITS: Provides relative to vapor products and alternative nicotine products	Passed -- Act No. 920.
HB 806	Rep. Vanessa Caston LaFleur	CRIME: Provides relative to hit-and-run driving offenses	Passed -- Act No. 86.
HB 902	Rep. C. Denise Marcelle	HEALTH: Provides relative to the creation of a trauma-informed training program	Failed.
HB 907	Rep. Dustin Miller	HEALTH CARE/PROVIDERS: Provides civil and criminal immunity for the distribution or use of Naloxone beyond its labeled expiration date	Passed -- Act No. 183.
SB 26	Sen. Patrick McMath	HEALTH SERVICES: Provides relative to opioid treatment programs.	Passed -- Act No. 232.
SB 43	Sen. Patrick McMath	HEALTH SERVICES: Provides relative to psychedelic-assisted therapy.	Passed -- Act No. 956.
SB 55	Sen. Jeremy Stine	MOTOR VEHICLES: Provides for clarification on the proper way to wear a safety belt. (8/1/26)	Passed -- Act No. 236.
SB 118	Sen. Gerald Boudreaux	CRIME/PUNISHMENT: Provides for substance use disorder screening of all misdemeanor DUI offenders.	Passed -- Act No. 212.
SB 168	Sen. Jeremy Stine	HEALTH SERVICES: Provides relative to the Addictive Disorder Regulatory Authority.	Did not become law.
SB 223	Sen. Jay Luneau	CRIME/PUNISHMENT: Creates the crime of failure to test for alcohol and controlled substances resulting in serious bodily injury or death. (8/1/26)	Failed.
SB 245	Sen. Brach Myers	MENTAL HEALTH: Provides relative to treatments for veterans.	Failed.
SB 278	Sen. Rick Edmonds	MOTOR VEHICLES: Prohibits the reinstatement of a driver's license suspended for DWI without installation of an ignition interlock device.	Failed.

National Observances

The Governor's Office of Drug Policy recognizes national observances as opportunities to increase public awareness, reduce stigma, educate communities, and promote prevention, treatment, recovery, and overdose prevention efforts. Throughout the year, the Office and its partners supported and promoted nationally recognized observances that align with its mission to improve the health and well-being of Louisianans.

March

In March, the Office recognized World Teen Mental Health Day on March 2, observed in green and purple to highlight the importance of early intervention, prevention, and supportive environments for youth mental health.

April

April brought National Alcohol Awareness Month, recognized in red; World Health Day on April 7; and National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on April 25, encouraging the safe disposal of unused and expired medications.

May

The Office observed National Mental Health Awareness Month throughout May in green, supporting mental health awareness, suicide prevention, and access to care.

June

In June, the Office recognized Men's Health Month in blue and PTSD Awareness Month in teal, bringing attention to trauma-informed care and support for veterans, first responders, and civilians.

September

September is a particularly active month for the Office's observance calendar. Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in teal and purple raised awareness and promoted community-based prevention strategies, anchored by World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10. The Office also marked 988 Day on September 8 and National Recovery Month in purple, celebrating individuals in recovery.

October

October brings Depression Awareness Month in green; National Substance Use Prevention Month and National Youth Substance Use Prevention Month in red; World Mental Health Day on October 10; and Red Ribbon Week from October 23-31, honoring the legacy of Enrique 'Kiki' Camarena.

November

The Office recognized the Great American Smokeout on November 19, observed in white to encourage individuals to quit smoking and vaping.

December

The Office closed the year by recognizing Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month throughout December in red, highlighting safe driving campaigns and prevention efforts.

Final Summary

The Drug Policy Board continued to advance its mission by strengthening collaboration among state agencies, community partners, and stakeholders to address substance use and behavioral health challenges across Louisiana. Through legislative monitoring, strategic partnerships, public awareness initiatives, and support of statewide prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement efforts, the Board remained committed to improving outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

2025-2026 marked a year of significant legislative and programmatic progress. The Office and its partners championed four major pieces of legislation: House Bill 492, codifying the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving into state law; House Bill 69, expanding ignition interlock device requirements; House Bill 82, increasing penalties for repeat DWI offenders; and Senate Bill 118, the Judge Jules Edwards III Impaired Driving Prevention Act.

Priorities for the Year Ahead

- **Completing the 2027-2030 strategic plan.** Finalizing the Office's next four-year Louisiana Substance Misuse Prevention Strategic Plan.
- **Advancing impaired driving prevention.** Continuing to support the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving through enforcement coordination, ignition interlock requirements, DWI screening, and public education.
- **Supporting continued overdose prevention progress.** Supporting the Louisiana Department of Health and its partners on naloxone distribution, expanded access to medications for opioid use disorder, and programs such as the Louisiana Bridge program and Project MOM.
- **Strengthening data and surveillance.** Continuing the State Epidemiological Workgroup's efforts to identify statewide data gaps, including coroner-level reporting and impaired-driving recidivism.
- **Continuing interagency collaboration.** Sustaining coordination across the Drug Policy Board, the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving, the Prevention Systems Committee, and the State Epidemiological Workgroup.