



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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Table of Contents

About the Governor's Office of Drug Policy 2

Introduction 3

Statutory Foundation 4

How the Boards Fit Together 8

Louisiana Partnerships for Success III (LaPFS III) 9

Office of Drug Policy Participation in the Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act 10

Drug Policy Board Membership 11

Drug Policy Board 12

2025 Legislative Highlights 13

Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving Membership 14

Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving 15

Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE Council) Membership .. 17

Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE Council) 18

Prevention Systems Committee 22

State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) 23

2026 Legislation Tracked and Monitored 25

National Observances 28

Final Summary 30

About the 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. This section documents the full legal mandate for each body.

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. It is 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). The Board is a body corporate operating within the Governor's Office.

Policy Statement (R.S. 49:219.1, as amended by Act 78)

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. The purpose of the Board is to establish a state agency positioned and empowered to elicit, motivate, advocate for, and coordinate the best efforts and ideas of all organizations, agencies, entities, and individuals toward the goal of eradicating substance and alcohol misuse and its harmful consequences.

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. The Governor's Office of Drug Policy and the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission are designated by statute to provide staff, facilities, and resources. An annual report to the Governor is required by February first of each year.

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

The Task Force is required by law to perform all of the following:

- (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, the prevalence of drivers refusing to submit to chemical testing, and strategies to reduce such occurrences.
- (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 to reduce impaired driving.
- (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 to improve effectiveness.
- (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 as updated annually by the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and the Strategic Highway Safety 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, and develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness of coordinated and multi-jurisdictional efforts.
- (10) Provide an annual report to the governor by February first of each year regarding the task force's findings, activities, and recommendations.
- (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. The Plan must include:

- 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.

Additional Statutory Duties (R.S. 49:219.5(F) and (G))

The Council shall coordinate parish-level data on opioid overdoses and usage of overdose-reversal medication, and shall coordinate a central online location to disseminate information and resources, including the Interagency Heroin and Opioid Coordination Plan.

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, established under La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3) and governed by PSC Bylaws revised September 11, 2018. It is composed of up to 35 members from state agencies, law enforcement, public health, higher education, and community organizations.

Purpose and Mission (PSC Bylaws, Article II)

- **Vision:** To recognize that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse is a serious social and public health issue that when addressed will create a climate of healthiness and community wellness for all of Louisiana.
- **Mission:** To implement the Louisiana Substance Abuse Prevention Strategic Plan in order to sustain the outcomes and support substance abuse prevention in Louisiana.
- **Aim:** To make recommendations regarding effective programs, policies, and practices and regarding prevention infrastructure resource and capacity issues, as well as develop a framework to build an advocacy network for prevention.

Member Roles and Responsibilities (PSC Bylaws, Article V)

- The PSC works in consultation and cooperation with the State Epidemiological Workgroup (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 for stakeholders and communities across Louisiana.
- Members may volunteer or be assigned to workgroups of the PSC and are responsible for task completion.

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

The State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) is a standing advisory committee of the Drug Policy Board, institutionalized by the Board effective December 2004 under La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3). The SEW is governed by its own bylaws last updated December 2021 and is 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.

Purpose (SEW Bylaws, Article II)

Vision: To recognize that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse is a serious social and public health issue that when addressed will create a climate of healthiness and community wellness for all of Louisiana (Revised November 17, 2005).

Member Roles and Responsibilities (SEW Bylaws, Article V)

- The SEW is an advisory committee of the Drug Policy Board that works in consultation and cooperation with the Prevention Systems Committee (PSC) to advise and make recommendations to the Drug Policy Board on issues regarding collecting, housing, analyzing, and reporting on data related to behavioral health.
- The SEW tracks and analyzes data on substance use trends to ground policy in evidence. That data is then provided to the Prevention Systems Committee, which uses it to develop public awareness content, policy briefs, and one-pagers for stakeholders and communities across Louisiana.
- Appointed members adhere to the Roles and Responsibilities outlined in the State Epidemiology Workgroup Cooperative Involvement Agreement.

Of-Counsel Roles (SEW Bylaws, Article VI)

The Of-Counsel membership category allows participation by interested agencies, organizations, or universities unable to commit to full participation or offering extensive expertise in a defined subject or geographic area. Of-Counsel Members provide advice as needed and are considered non-voting members, but may participate in SEW workgroup proceedings.

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.

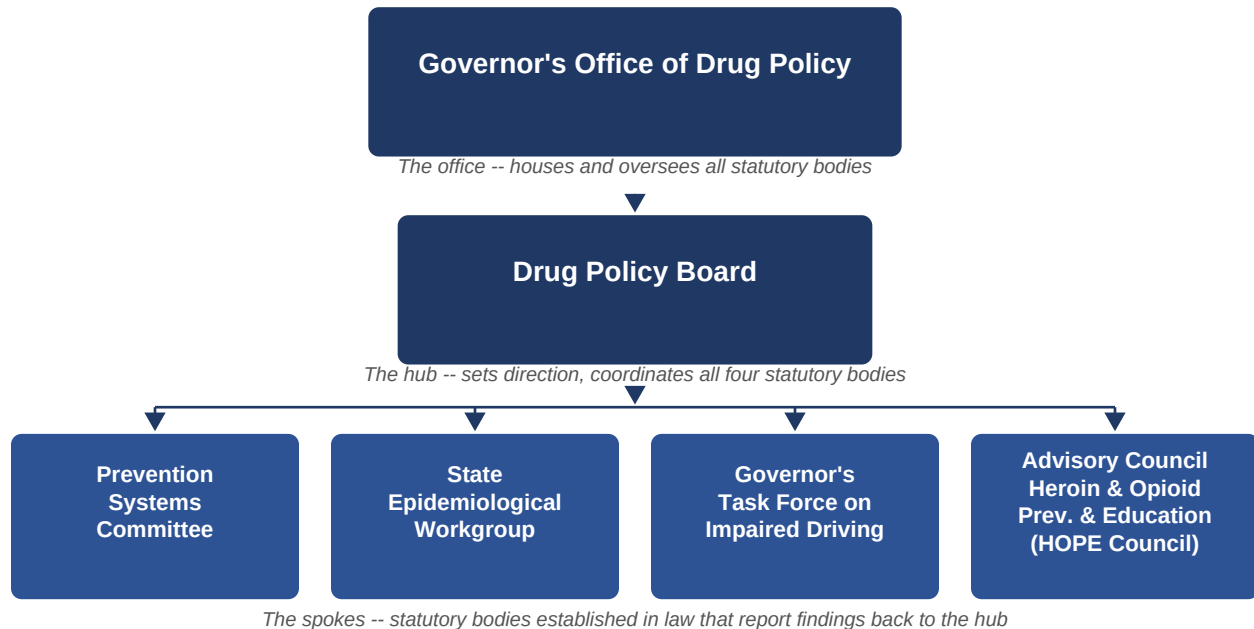


Figure 1. The Governor's Office of Drug Policy (top), Drug Policy Board (hub), and its four statutory bodies (spokes).

The Hub: Drug Policy Board

Established by the Legislature in 1990 (La. R.S. 49:219.1-4), the Drug Policy Board sits under the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and serves as the coordinating hub for all four statutory bodies. Chaired by Dr. Shayla Polk of the Governor's Office of Drug Policy, its mission is to elicit, motivate, and coordinate the efforts of agencies and individuals across the state toward eradicating drug and alcohol misuse. Its 25-seat membership spans Governor's appointees, legislative appointees, and designees from state agencies (see the full roster below).

The Four Spokes: Statutory Bodies Established in Law

Each of the four statutory bodies below is established in Louisiana law, focuses on one piece of the larger mission, and feeds information and recommendations back up to the Drug Policy Board:

- **Prevention Systems Committee** -- established under La. R.S. 49:219.2(B)(2) and (3), focuses on building and sustaining community-level prevention programs and developing public awareness content, policy briefs, and one-pagers using data from the SEW.
- **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, providing that data to the Prevention Systems Committee.
- **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, evidence-based countermeasures, education, and policy.

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. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to implementing data-driven prevention strategies that improve behavioral health outcomes and reduce the impact of substance misuse throughout Louisiana.

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, reflecting the strength and credibility of Louisiana's drug policy structure at the national level.

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 & Designees)	
1	Executive Director, Office of Drug Policy (or designee)
2	Superintendent, Louisiana State Police (or designee)
3	Superintendent of Education (or designee)
4	Commander in Chief, Louisiana National Guard (or designee)
5	Attorney General (or designee)
6	Secretary, Department of Public Safety & Corrections (or designee)
7	Secretary, Department of Children & Family Services (or designee)
8	Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health (or designee)
9	Commissioner, Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control (or designee)
10	Executive Director, Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (or designee)
11	Member, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission
Legislative Appointees	
12	Member, House Committee on Health and Welfare (appointed by the Speaker of the House)
13	Member, Senate Committee on Health and Welfare (appointed by the President of the Senate)
Governor's Appointees	
14	Representative of a federal agency with responsibilities in alcohol and drug abuse education, treatment, or prevention
15	Physician representing substance misuse treatment or prevention
16	Representative of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association
17	Individual in recovery for more than five years, actively engaged in substance use prevention
18	Member, Louisiana Board of Pharmacy
19	Designee for the Director, Louisiana Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office
20	District Court Judge
21	Representative of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association
22	Representative of the Board of Regents, specializing in collegiate recovery education and behavioral health services
23	Representative of the Indigent Defender System
24	Representative of the alcohol industry
25	Representative of a private or nonprofit organization providing substance use education, treatment, and prevention

Drug Policy Board

The Drug Policy Board is the central statutory body within the Governor's Office of Drug Policy, bringing together voting members, of-council 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 history and current regulatory landscape for hemp-derived and CBD products in Louisiana, including the challenges of enforcement and recent reforms under Act 752. Dr. Shayla Polk reviewed legislation enacted during the 2025 Regular Session affecting hemp products, synthetic substances, school disciplinary protocols, alternative nicotine products, drug paraphernalia, nitrous oxide, and kratom. Member updates included O'Brien House's plans for National Recovery Month and a Louisiana State Police presentation on Oregon's post-legalization cannabis market data.

October 23, 2025

The Board's fourth quarterly meeting included presentations on the Seymore D'Fair Foundation's Kiki's Red Ribbon School Celebration, a K–6 prevention curriculum reaching over 10,000 Louisiana students; Livingston Parish Public Schools' use of opioid abatement funding for vape detection and the RISE expulsion-deferment program; 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, outperforming the national trend. The Board voted to support codifying the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving into state law, pursuing legislation requiring substance use disorder screening for misdemeanor DUI offenders, and placing proposed revisions to several impaired-driving statutes on a future agenda.

January 22, 2026

Dr. Shayla Polk reviewed 2025 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. The Board also received an update on the Office's end-of-year reporting and the development of its 2027–2030 strategic plan.

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, also by Dr. Polk, addressed emerging drug trends among Louisiana youth, highlighting nicotine vaping and pouches, high-potency cannabis, alcohol, prescription drug misuse, fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills, and a range of emerging substances including Delta-8 and synthetic THC. The presentation emphasized the importance of early prevention investment and previewed the May 2026 Substance Misuse, Mental Health, and Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol.

2025 Legislative Highlights

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

Senate Bill 154 (Act 41), which took effect on August 1, 2025, classified kratom as a controlled substance in Louisiana, making the possession, sale, and distribution of kratom unlawful under state law. The legislation was enacted in response to increasing concerns regarding the substance's psychoactive effects, potential for misuse, and associated public health risks.

Throughout the legislative process, the Louisiana Drug Policy Board monitored and supported the legislation as part of its commitment to addressing emerging substance use issues and strengthening Louisiana's drug policy framework. Following its passage, the Board has continued to support public awareness and implementation efforts to ensure stakeholders understand the new law and its impact. The enactment of Act 41 represents an important step in Louisiana's efforts to proactively address emerging substances and protect the health and safety of its residents.

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

House Bill 316 (Act 78), effective August 1, 2025, strengthened the Louisiana Drug Policy Board by expanding its membership and enhancing its statutory responsibilities to better coordinate statewide substance use prevention, treatment, recovery, and policy initiatives.

The legislation, which was supported by the Drug Policy Board, expanded membership to include additional perspectives from collegiate recovery and 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. These additions ensure broader representation and expertise in the Board's efforts to advise the Governor and Legislature on evidence-based drug policy and statewide strategies.

Act 78 also reinforces the Board's role in promoting collaboration among state agencies and community partners while strengthening its focus on prevention, treatment, recovery support, and coordinated policy development. The legislation reflects the Drug Policy Board's ongoing commitment to enhancing Louisiana's comprehensive approach to addressing substance use and improving outcomes for individuals, families, and communities across the state.

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, designated by the Commander
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 across law enforcement, the judiciary, prosecutors, and public health partners 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. Each of the four workgroups reported on progress for the year, and 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. Dr. Polk and Lisa Freeman closed the year by reflecting on 2025 progress and outlining priorities for 2026.

February 11, 2026

Baton Rouge Police Sergeant Jason Martin shared his personal experience as a victim of impaired driving, underscoring the importance of the Task Force's mission. 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. Lisa Freeman reported that an end-of-year accomplishments report was underway for review at the May meeting.

May 13, 2026

The Task Force's second quarterly meeting of the year featured presentations on Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training from Wildlife and Fisheries, the role of the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, and judicial education efforts led by Judge Tim Marcel. Workgroup 4 reported that House Bills 69 and 82, along with the substance use disorder screening bill, had successfully passed the legislature. The group discussed plans for media messaging on impaired driving costs and proposals for future sessions, including an extended DWI lookback period.

Legislative Accomplishments — 2026 Session

The following legislative outcomes were developed and championed through the work of the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving and its board members during 2025–2026:

Codification of the Task Force (HB 492). Established the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving in state law, providing a permanent statutory foundation for its work.

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. This legislation carries forward the work of Task Force member Judge Jules Edwards III following his passing, bringing a longstanding Task Force initiative into law.

HB 69 (Act 49) Ignition Interlock Device Offenses. Expands and clarifies who is required to use an ignition interlock device (IID) following a DWI conviction and confirms that offenders ordered to use an IID as a probation condition may not legally operate a vehicle without one. Signed by the Governor as Act 49, effective August 1, 2026.

HB 82 (Act 117) Penalties for Repeat DWI Offenses. Increases penalties for repeat DWI offenders, particularly third- and fourth-offense convictions, raising fines and lengthening prison sentences to deter repeat impaired driving.

Workgroup Accomplishments

Across 2025–2026, the Task Force's four standing workgroups accomplished the following:

- **Codified the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving:** Established the Task Force in State Law through HB 492.
- **Championed the Judge Jules Edwards III Impaired Driving Prevention Act (SB 118/Act 212):** Led the development and advancement of legislation requiring substance use disorder screenings for individuals convicted of first and second offense DWI, carrying forward the work of Task Force member Judge Jules Edwards III after his passing and bringing a longstanding Task Force initiative into law.
- **Developed an Impaired Driving Data Summary:** Identified statewide data gaps to improve future data collection, integration, and reporting.
- **Developed the Ignition Interlock Reference Guide:** Created a statewide resource to support consistent implementation of ignition interlock requirements.
- **Developed a State Law Summary:** Compared Louisiana's impaired driving laws with those of other states to identify opportunities for future policy improvements.
- **Supported Youth Impaired Driving Education:** Shared and promoted a statewide youth impaired driving education video as part of Louisiana's impaired driving prevention efforts.
- **Drafted and recommended HB 69 (Act 49):** Provides relative to ignition interlock device offenses — expands and clarifies who is required to use an ignition interlock device (IID) after a DWI conviction, makes clear that offenders ordered to have an IID as a condition of probation cannot legally operate a vehicle unless it is equipped with a functioning IID, and aligns IID requirements with Louisiana's existing DWI laws. Passed and signed by the Governor as Act 49, effective August 1, 2026.
- **Drafted and recommended HB 82 (Act 117):** Provides relative to penalties for DWI offenses — increases penalties for repeat DWI offenders, particularly third- and fourth-offense convictions, raises fines and lengthens prison sentences, and increases the minimum sentence for a fourth-offense DWI, allowing substantially longer prison terms in the most serious cases. The legislation was intended to deter repeat impaired driving and improve public safety.

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))	
• Louisiana Board of Pharmacy	• Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners
• Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	• Louisiana District Attorneys Association
• Louisiana State Medical Society	• Chiropractic Association of Louisiana
• Louisiana Physical Therapy Association	• Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police
• Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association	• Louisiana State Nurses Association
• Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners	• Louisiana Ambulance Alliance
• Louisiana State Board of Nursing	• Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association
• Louisiana Poison Control Center	• Louisiana-Mississippi Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
• Optometry Association of Louisiana	• Louisiana Association of Health Plans
• 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 through clinical, public health, and systems-level strategies. The Council held quarterly meetings throughout 2025–2026; minutes from the July 2025, October 2025, and January 2026 meetings are summarized below.

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

July 10, 2025

Dr. Mishka Terplan of the Friends Research Institute presented on substance use disorder and pregnancy, emphasizing universal voluntary screening over punitive testing and the harms of stigma-driven policy. Dr. Benjamin Springgate of LSU Health discussed kratom risks and confirmed Louisiana's new statewide ban, effective August 1, 2025. 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 also presented on the Louisiana Crisis Response System, the 988 Lifeline, and compassionate overdose response best practices, including updated guidance on naloxone dosing.

October 9, 2025

Presenters from the La Bridge program described embedding substance use navigators in hospital emergency departments, which has connected over 1,800 patients to treatment and peer support across four hospital systems. Tranettea Williams of the Louisiana Opioid Surveillance Program reported a 31% decline in drug-involved deaths statewide in 2024. Physicians from Our Lady of the Angels Hospital presented on the Rise Up program, which supports pregnant women with substance use disorder through screening, medication-assisted treatment, and the Eat-Sleep-Console approach for opioid-exposed newborns. The Healthcare Impact Group also shared research on GLP-1 medications and persistent racial disparities in overdose mortality and treatment access.

January 29, 2026

Dana Wilkoz, a Public Health Analyst with the CDC Foundation Overdose Response Strategy (ORS), presented on the ORS program in Louisiana, a nationally coordinated public health and public safety collaboration designed to reduce fatal and non-fatal overdoses by connecting public health and public safety, sharing data and intelligence, and supporting evidence-based prevention strategies. Louisiana data from 2019–2024 show declines in all drug-involved, opioid-involved, synthetic opioid-involved, and stimulant-involved deaths, with ORS partnering with Gulf Coast HIDTA, LDH's Louisiana Opioid Surveillance Initiative, the New Orleans Health Department, and the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab on cross-sector data sharing, drug trend bulletins, and overdose fatality reviews. Curtis Nelson, Executive Counsel with the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Administration Corporation (OAAC) and Task Force (LaOATF), presented on the structure and use of opioid settlement funds, which are divided 80% to parishes and 20% to sheriffs' offices under a statewide Memorandum of Understanding and limited to treatment, prevention, and other approved strategies, with annual public reporting required on funds received, awards approved, and disbursements. David Howard Sinkman presented on federal civil rights protections for individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD), explaining that OUD can

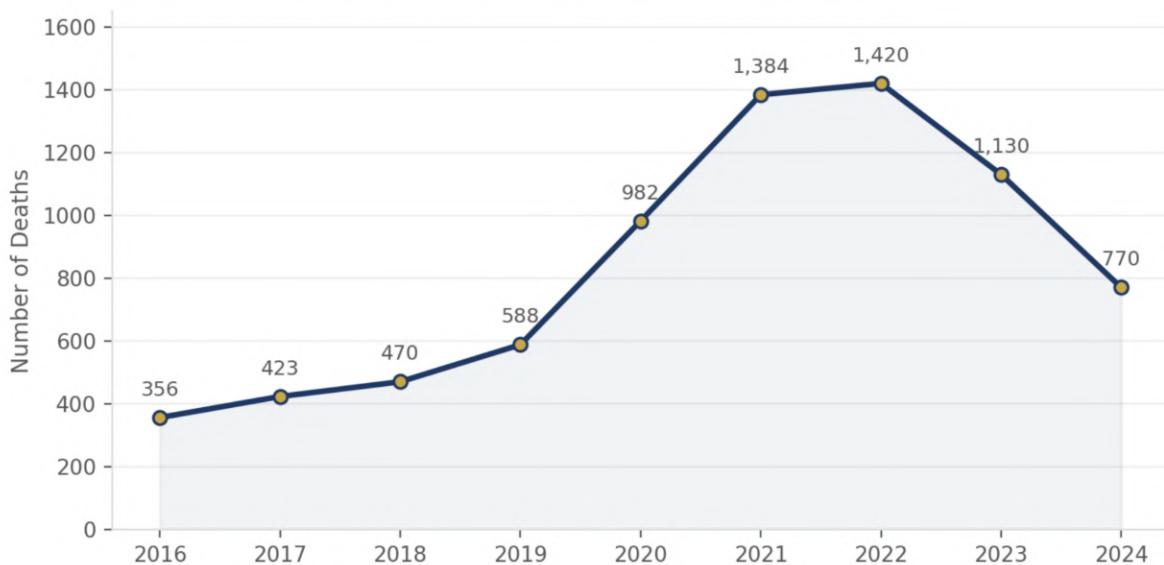
qualify as a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Affordable Care Act, and that denying admission or restricting access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in settings such as jails, hospitals, and recovery homes can constitute unlawful discrimination. In general updates, the Office of Behavioral Health reported on Louisiana Bridge, pharmacy stocking changes, and Medicaid Board action removing prior authorization and increasing the buprenorphine dosing limit to 32; the Council noted an ongoing need for a new Community Impact Group lead; and the Public Safety Impact Group reported on a peer support training at Elayn Hunt Correctional Center, from which six individuals graduated and have been positively received within the facility. The Council was also reminded that the 2025 HOPE Year-End Report is in development, with outstanding data requests to be submitted to the Office of Drug Policy.

2025 HOPE Year-End Report Summary

The HOPE Council's 2025 Year-End Report of State and Local Responses to the Opioid Crisis — the Council's Interagency Coordination Plan required under Act 88 of the 2017 Legislative Session — 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.

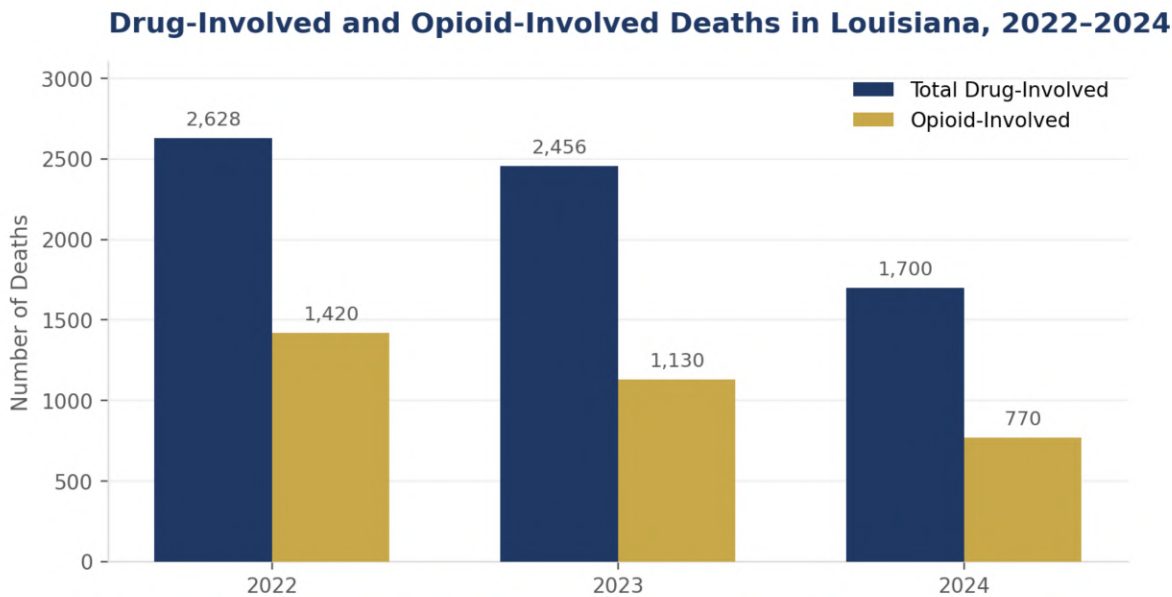
Key Findings and Trends. Nationally, drug overdose deaths decreased to 80,856 for the 12-month period ending December 2024, a 24.5% decline from the prior year. In Louisiana, drug overdose deaths decreased by 33.3% to 1,503 for the same period, per CDC data. Louisiana's own surveillance data (LODSS) similarly recorded 770 opioid-involved deaths in 2024, a 31.8% decrease from 2023, with the largest declines in synthetic-opioid-involved deaths (down 37%) and heroin-involved deaths (down 47%). The five parishes with the highest numbers of opioid-involved deaths by residence in 2024 were Jefferson, St. Tammany, Livingston, Rapides, and Lafayette. Louisiana Medicaid opioid prescriptions filled in SFY 2025 decreased by 40,542 compared to SFY 2024, and 123,556 naloxone kits were distributed statewide through the LaSOR grant and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, an increase of 32,729 kits over the prior reporting period.

Opioid-Involved Deaths in Louisiana, 2016-2024



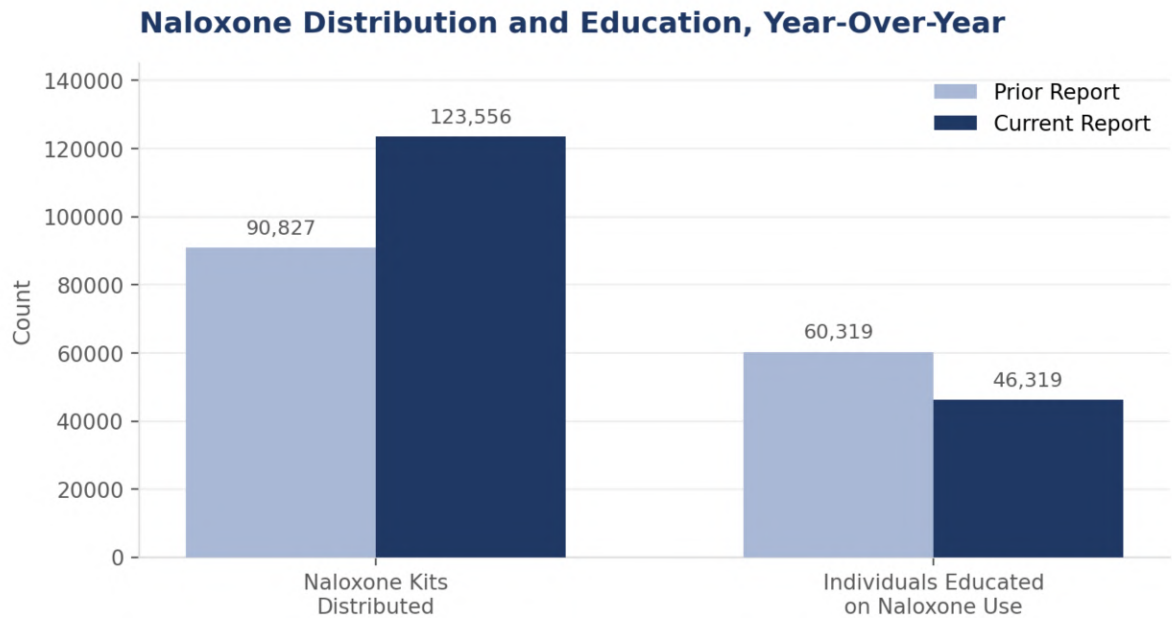
Source: Louisiana Electronic Event Registration System (LODSS)

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 report highlights the DEA's 2025 telemedicine rules expanding flexibility for prescribing buprenorphine and other controlled substances, 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 (Maternal Overdose Mortality), 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. The HOPE Council's recommendations for 2026 include the following:

- 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, including detailed national, state, and parish-level data, Medicaid impact tables, and appendices, is available at www.ldh.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, with the committee recommending the brief include clear reporting resources such as ATC hotlines and the P3 Tips app. The committee also discussed nicotine sachets as an emerging youth concern, noting their potency and the difficulty of detecting them with existing vape-detection tools. 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. Members discussed priority areas including youth-targeted nicotine marketing restrictions and local ordinances limiting vape shop proximity to schools. The committee also discussed potential federal policy changes affecting consumable hemp and agreed to seek a briefing from federal officials. 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. Dr. Polk provided an overview of impaired-driving legislation under consideration, including ignition interlock requirements and enhanced penalties for repeat offenders. Members were asked to submit priority topics for the committee's future agenda, including youth vaping, marijuana policy, and school-based prevention. The Governor's Office of Drug Policy also shared updates on the Substance Use, Mental Health, and Suicide Prevention Awareness Day and the Louisiana Youth Wellness Summit, both scheduled for 2026.

State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW)

The State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) serves as the data-collection counterpart to the Prevention Systems Committee within the Governor's Office of Drug Policy's committee structure. The SEW tracks and analyzes data on substance use trends to ground policy in evidence. That analyzed data is then used by the Prevention Systems Committee to develop public awareness content, policy briefs, and one-pagers for stakeholders and communities across Louisiana. 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. Members discussed potential guest speakers and data-sharing opportunities, including recurring drug-trend updates from the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab, mortality and overdose data from the Louisiana Coroners' Association, and prescription monitoring data from the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy. 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. Members discussed improving statewide data-sharing, engaging university partners, and addressing gaps in the online youth survey data repository. 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. Catherine Childers shared lessons from the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving's effort to map fragmented data sources across agencies, including a notable gap in statewide data on impaired-driving recidivism, and suggested a similar data-mapping approach for the Workgroup. 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, underscoring the value of rapid toxicology testing in understanding polysubstance exposure. 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 to identify potential impacts on Louisiana's policies, programs, and stakeholders.

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 #	State 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 — Became 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 services for public school students	Passed — Act No. 944.
HB 373	Rep. Candace N. Newell	HEALTH: Provides for the Louisiana Cannabis Pilot Program	Failed.

Bill #	State Representative/Senator	Official Bill Title (2026 Regular Session)	Final Outcome
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 'Big John' Illg 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.
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.

Bill #	State Representative/Senator	Official Bill Title (2026 Regular Session)	Final Outcome
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 several observances supported by the Office. National Alcohol Awareness Month, recognized throughout the month in red, highlighted prevention, treatment, and recovery supports related to alcohol use. World Health Day on April 7, recognized in blue and white, emphasized holistic approaches to health, including mental and behavioral health. National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on April 25, recognized in blue, encouraged 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, encouraging prevention screenings, mental health check-ins, and overall wellness, alongside PTSD Awareness Month in teal, which brought 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, recognized throughout the month in teal and purple, raised awareness, encouraged open dialogue, and promoted community-based prevention strategies, anchored by World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10. The Office also marked 988 Day on September 8, highlighting the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline as a critical state and national resource, and National Recovery Month, recognized in purple throughout September, celebrating individuals in recovery and the importance of treatment and support services.

October

October likewise carries several observances central to the Office's mission. Depression Awareness Month, recognized in green, encouraged education, early detection, and treatment, while National Substance Use Prevention Month and National Youth Substance Use Prevention Month, both recognized in red, mobilized communities and supported schools, families, and community-based prevention efforts. World Mental Health Day on October 10, recognized in green, aligned Louisiana's recognition with global mental health awareness efforts, and Red Ribbon Week from October 23-31, recognized in red, reaffirmed the state's commitment to drug prevention and drug-free communities while 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. As these efforts continue to expand, the Board will remain focused on identifying emerging issues, supporting evidence-based strategies, and fostering collaboration to improve the health and safety of all Louisianans.

2025–2026 marked a year of significant legislative and programmatic progress. The Office and its partners championed four major pieces of legislation during the 2026 Regular Session: House Bill 492, codifying the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving into state law; House Bill 69, expanding and clarifying ignition interlock device requirements following a DWI conviction; House Bill 82, increasing penalties for repeat DWI offenders; and Senate Bill 118, the Judge Jules Edwards III Impaired Driving Prevention Act, requiring substance use disorder screening for first- and second-offense DWI. Beyond these legislative wins, the year saw continued declines in drug-involved overdose deaths statewide, expanded access to medications for opioid use disorder, and sustained collaboration across the Drug Policy Board, the Task Force on Impaired Driving, the HOPE Council, the Prevention Systems Committee, and the State Epidemiological Workgroup.

Priorities for the Year Ahead

Building on this progress, the Office and its boards and committees will continue to focus on the following priorities in the year ahead:

- **Completing the 2027–2030 strategic plan.** Finalizing the Office's next four-year Louisiana Substance Misuse Prevention Strategic Plan, building on the data and priorities identified throughout this reporting period.
- **Advancing impaired driving prevention and roadway safety.** Continuing to support the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving and its workgroups in reducing impaired driving through enforcement coordination, ignition interlock requirements, DWI screening, and public education on roadway safety.
- **Supporting continued overdose prevention progress.** Continuing to support the Louisiana Department of Health and its partners on naloxone distribution and education, expanded access to medications for opioid use disorder, and the statewide rollout of programs such as the Louisiana Bridge program and Project MOM.
- **Maintaining the Partnerships for Success (PFS) grant liaison role.** Continuing to serve as liaison between the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and the Louisiana Department of Health's Office of Behavioral Health on the federally funded LA Partnerships for Success grant.
- **Strengthening data and surveillance.** Continuing the State Epidemiological Workgroup's efforts to identify statewide data gaps, including coroner-level reporting and impaired-driving recidivism, to better inform policy and program decisions.
- **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 to ensure a unified, statewide response to substance use and behavioral health needs.