



RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

Healthcare and Human Services Task Force

April 28, 2020

Meeting commenced: 3 p.m.

Healthcare Task Force Members Present

- Veneeth Iyengar – ACAO – Office of the Mayor-President – Baton Rouge
- Todd Stevens - CEO of Mary Bird Perkins
- Dr. Lester Wayne Johnson - General Surgery - Monroe – Our Lady of the Lake
- Scott Wester -CEO of Our Lady of the Lake
- Warner Thomas - CEO - Ochsner
- Greg Fiern - CEO of LCMC Health
- Steve Udverhelhi - BSBC CEO
- Teddy Rae Price - Nursing Home Association - Alexandria
- Demetrious Porche - Louisiana Association of Educators
- Lisa Bruhl
- Terry Bonnette - Director of Public Health - Tunica
- Clay Countrymen - Healthcare Law
- Renee McCuller - VP of Nursing - Willis Knighten Medical Center
- Edgardo Tenreri - CEO - Baton Rouge General
- Richard Vath - CEO of FOML System

COMMISSION MEMBERS

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Louisiana Economic Development

TERRIE STERLING, CO-CHAIR

Healthcare Consultant

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Healthcare Task Force Concerns and Recommendations

- Pursuant to orders issued by Governor John Bel Edwards, non-essential operations were suspended on March 22, 2020, in an effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus; the suspension is extended through May 15, 2020). As a result, retailers, restaurants, and businesses around the state ceased to operate.
- Stakeholders across the state agree—Louisiana does not yet have adequate systems for increased testing measures and contact tracing, both of which are essential to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus following the completion of the current Stay at Home Order.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and compounded vulnerability in Louisiana, which will be continuously threatened as we move forward if we do not find a solution to reopen our economic sector and prevent the spread of the virus simultaneously. The Resilient Louisiana Commission tasks experts in the private and public sectors to prepare and guide our residents as we respond to the crisis and to create a long-term plan for recovery and increased resiliency in the state.
- The Healthcare Task Force will continue to make recommendations in accordance with the guidance from state and federal leaders while taking public health into consideration for Louisiana's next steps in the pandemic response.
- The members of the Task Force therefore urge and request that the governor and the Louisiana Department of Health make the following considerations in regards to reopening the State of Louisiana and continuing our efforts to prevent the spread of the virus and protect vulnerable populations.

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That consistent with the federal and state criteria as promulgated in the Guidelines for Opening Up America Again and the Stay at Home Order, that entities in the state of Louisiana consider the following concerns and recommendations.

Healthcare

- Several providers from around the state have expressed concerns with patients not seeking care for non-COVID-19 related conditions and the reluctance of patients to schedule procedures and surgeries now even if waiting may impact their conditions.
- It would be beneficial to the overall picture for the Louisiana Department of Health and the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners to provide, and continue to provide on-going guidance and clarification for the performance of medical and surgical procedures, and the conditions to address concerns with the spread of COVID-19 that providers are required to meet.
- The governor, as well as other leaders, should emphasize the importance of continued medical treatment for non-COVID patients.

Contact Tracing

- Members of the task force do not believe the state has the proper infrastructure in place to make contact tracing effective.
- Recommendations include recruiting displaced workers and students to work as tracers.
- Task force members recommend assessing how other states are implementing contact tracing in order to use previously tested best practices. This will help Louisiana set up a system quickly and effectively.

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Testing

- COVID-19 is a disease that disproportionately kills members of our older population. A disproportionate number of those who are dying live in nursing homes.
 - We have not and are not systematically testing residents and employees in nursing homes, even though we have had the COVID-19 testing capacity to do so for several weeks.
- As the state prepares to reopen, we should move towards systematically and regularly testing nursing homes residents and employees. It is recommended to do so on a seven-day period if possible.
 - Task force members recommend starting with facilities with the fewest number of positive cases in the hopes they can remain negative, and then move to facilities with higher number of positives.
 - Suggestions include separating positive and negative cases to prevent the further spread of the virus.
 - Visits to nursing homes and medical facilities should remain limited until there is a significant increase in testing availability and contact tracing systems.
- Vulnerable and high-risk populations — including nursing homes, prisons and medical facilities – should be a priority in the allocation of testing and tracing resources. This includes personal protective equipment, tests, and the focus of the contact tracing systems.
- All employees and patients who show signs of COVID-19 should be presumed positive and isolated from those who are not symptomatic.

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