



RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON

CO-CHAIR TERRIE STERLING

Resilient Louisiana Commission

Task Force Presentations:

Healthcare & Human Services Task Force, Energy Task Force, Construction Task Force,
Restaurant & Entertainment Task Force

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Meeting called to order at: 9:01 a.m.

Commission Members Present

- Terrie Sterling
- Sec. Don Pierson
- Sec. Kimberly Lewis Robinson
- Bill Hogan
- Walt Leger, III
- Ti Martin
- Sonia Perez
- Tyron Picard
- Jade Brown Russell
- Tim Temple

Meeting

- Resilient Louisiana Commission Director Andrew Doss called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. He called roll, announced that a quorum was reached and confirmed that the meeting could be held virtually under the rules of Gov. John Bel Edwards's Executive Proclamation 2020-41.
- As four task force presentations were to take place during the meeting, Doss asked the presenters asked to keep presentations short. He turned the meeting over to Co-chairs Don Pierson and Terrie Sterling.
- Sec. Pierson welcomed all commissioners, task force members and members of the public.
- Terrie Sterling thanked everyone for joining, and said she looked forward to another day of informative presentations.
- Andrew Doss then turned the meeting over to Veneeth Iyengar, leader of the Healthcare and Human Services Task Force

Healthcare and Human Services Task Force Presentation

- Veneeth said that his presentation will be the distilled high-level recommendations that the task force made over the past several weeks. He introduced task force members: Randy Morris, Terrie Sterling, Terry Bonnette, Lisa Bruhl, Clay Countrymen, Greg Feirn, Dr. Lester Wayne Johnson, Renee McCuller, Demetrious Porche, Teddy Price, Todd Stevens, Edgardo Tenreiro, Warner Thomas, Steve Udvarhelyi, Richard Vath, Scott Wester
- He then provided the task force's methodology: the group provided recommendations for phase one, and the task force decided to divide itself into four sub-work groups focused on:
 - Transforming Healthcare Outcomes
 - Payment Reform Innovations
 - Workforce Development
 - Impact to Rural Healthcare/Nursing Homes/VA/Tribal
- He also said the that the group was fortunate to have guest presentations from recognized subject matter experts: Alexander Billioux, Dean Sandra Brown, Stuart Archer, Robert Vorhoff, Andy Slavitt – former Acting Administrator: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

- He opened this presentation with the state of healthcare today, noting that approximately 19 percent of population is below federal poverty level, and that 79 percent of individuals over the age of 25 have graduated from high school, compared to 85 percent nationally.
- He then shared the sector impact Assessment, Key take-aways of which are that the American Hospital Association estimates that US hospitals have lost \$202.6 billion due to the pandemic; that Louisiana hospitals saw an increase in costs for PPE, additional staff and more, while experiencing a decrease in profitable surgical business. Additionally, as of June 10, more than 44,400 cases of COVID were confirmed in Louisiana resulting in 2,874 deaths. These numbers are exacerbated by long-standing health inequities in the state, 50 percent of deaths have been African American.
- Then was the sector vulnerability assessment; the socio-economic status of Louisiana has made the healthcare sector more vulnerable to disruption by COVID-19; the outcomes are directly correlated to the social determinates of health, each of which ash been exacerbated by the pandemic
- Veneeth then went on to discuss the work on the sub-working group, transforming health outcomes. The key challenges and consideration in the state; chronic disease accounted for 7 of 10 leading causes of deaths. These conditions disproportionately impacted minority populations across Louisiana, with COVID-19 outcomes expected to mirror Louisiana's chronic disease rate.
- He continued that to address the socio-economic factors causing the disparities, the state needed to implement key strategies, including facilitating a comprehensive universal chronic disease dataset for providers and insurers. Another key concerned workforce, in that nursing education capacity has surfaced as a workforce vulnerability.
- For strategies to address these issues, the task force offered a near term focus, which includes funding higher education and healthcare providers via workforce grants, displaced worker retraining, tuition assistance and other means that address workforce supply issues, as well as developing strategies that address identified disparities in students who meet nursing program admission criteria but who are not admitted. For a long-term focus, the task force encourages financially supporting colleges of nursing to increase class sizes, nursing faculty, and program options with a special emphasis on maintaining HBCU nursing programs.
- Another key challenge is Medicaid, in that as coverage increases, so will the need to improve the sustainability of primary care. Related challenges included provider shortages, healthcare literacy and patients with complex health issues. Near-term

strategies to address these challenges include increase transportation options for medicaid recipients by allowing the use of Lyft and Uber in the non-emergency medical transportation broker program, using successful modes employed in other states. A long-term focus would be to increase MCO investments in enhancing determinates of health.

- Rural hospital revitalization was also a key challenge discussed, in that hospital system in rural areas faces shortages. To address, the task force recommends expanding telemedicine access, transportation services and increasing accessibility to high-speed internet.
- In his concluding remarks, Veneeth said the state has a unique opportunity to elevate its ability to improve healthcare outcomes for all. There is a strong desire among task force members to not stop its efforts to creating a more resilient healthcare ecosystem today; that opportunities to create innovative public private partnerships combining our natural healthcare strengths do exist. A closer partnership with public health decision makers is desired.
- Andrew Doss then opened the meeting up to questions and comments from the commissioners. Jim Richardson began with the statement that Louisiana is lacking is a certified Cancer Research Center. Terrie Sterling responded that expanding biomedical research opportunities covers that.
- Jade Brown-Russell provided remarks commending the task force on its efforts
- Tyron Picard asked what are the impediments to public-private partnerships. Veneeth responded that as we look to implement recommendations, the task force participants and the colleagues they represent want an enhanced and better cooperation with decision makers at LDH, a request that is not intended to be adversarial. Terrie added that in the public and private partnership, the public health delivery of it has been defunded.
- Andrew Doss then opened the meeting up comments in questions from the public. Dorian Nunez began, commending the group on its presentation, especially for the mention of HBCUs. He also emphasized that private sector money is available to help health care, and that funding packages must be structured properly and have to include environmental healthcare.
- Andrew Doss thanked the Healthcare and Human Services task force, and moved meeting over to representatives to Energy Task Force

Energy Task Force Presentation

- Energy Task Force leader Rhoman Hardy began the presentation and introduced the members of the task force: Shane Hilton, Brian Bond, Greg Bowser, Gifford Briggs, Blake Canfield, Dino Chouest, Elizabeth Ellison-Frost, Laura Ferrell, Tyler Gray, Mayor Jeff Hall, Mayor Nic Hunter, Matt Jewell, Chip Little, Rochelle Michaud-Dugas, Jody Montelaro, Helena Moreno, Nick Piatek, Randy Pierce, Major Thibaut, Mayor Jennifer Vidrine, Karl Weber
- Rhoman noted that the group was structured to represent various sectors, and consolidated group feedback into report. The Energy sector was deemed an essential sector to provide the various services throughout the pandemic, and in the midst of providing essential services, the sector also dealt with the pandemic's impact on its people impact and concurrent market issues.
- He shared that the task force first had to figure out protocols as provided by CDC. One thing that became evident to task force members is that the more the state is able to align on clear protocols, the more the systems can be successful.
- The industry is actively support providing utilities to people who can't afford to pay bills during the pandemic, but energy sector will need support of its own for stability. There is a mismatch between expenses and revenue that is creating a tremendous strain on the energy sector.
- At some point in their meetings, the task force discussed a McKinsey study, which stated that the recovery of the industry will not be swift, but rather a number of years. Revenue reduction is real and not likely to come back as fast compared to previous downturns. One thing that became key is that for those who are struggling to pay energy bills, there may be programs available to provide help them
- Task force Co-chair Shane Hilton said that the demand destruction that the oil and gas sector is seeing is equally as devastating in the utility sector. The industry is operating under a do not disconnect order, meaning that even if revenues are coming in, services must be provided. Even when things begin to improve, this issue isn't going to self-correct itself in a few weeks.
- The task force leaders shared one final point, that the industry is seeing a direct shift in demand from Commercial and Industrial energy demands to more residential demands.

- Terrie Sterling asked if there was a way to quantify the delinquent accounts. Shane replied that the industry has seen a 25 to 27 percent increase in accounts receivable. He said the Public Service Commission will revisit the issue on Wednesday to discuss living the disconnect ban in coming weeks. Rhoman said that this sector is very important to the state that in the industry you find a sector that is willing to change in order to thrive.
- Andrew Doss opened the floor to comments and questions from the commissioners. No questions:
- Andrew Doss then opened the floor to members of the public. Dorien Nunez said we are working on a business model that allows major corporations and utilities to recapture money that is currently overseas and untaxed. Are you available to have a conversation with how some of that money might be captured, and if the answer is yes, are you ready to commit that some of that money will be invested in Louisiana. Andrew Doss said this is perhaps part of a conversation to be had on Friday.
- Terrie Sterling was grateful for the comprehensive support
- Andrew Doss then moved on to the Construction Task Force

Construction Task Force Presentation.

- Andrew Doss then introduced representatives of Construction Task Force to give presentation. Task force leader Domoine Rutledge began by acknowledging his co-chair Mike Polito, and thanking whoever had anything to do with assembly the task force as it was a strong group. He provided compliments to members.
- Domoine started the presentation with a sector impact assessment, and that the collective thinking of the group was that the impact on the construction sector has been minimal, but that impact will be felt in quarters three and four as contract work that was funded prior to covid is completed.
- In the sector vulnerability assessment, 30 percent of building materials imported to the US are from China, whose own COVID experience has caused a distribution in the supply of materials. Additionally, the industry is reliant on craft laborers, many of whom can receive higher compensation through unemployment benefits than through unskilled craft labor compensation.
- He said that the short-term recommendations from the task force included the identification of economic solutions to sustain the sector. Those strategies are protection for the industry from a liability perspective, regulations, guidelines, tax

credits, inspections, unemployment compensation competition, state initiated stimulus package.

- He continued that the post COVID recommendations from the task force include securing legislation that protects employers from frequent and unreasonable exposure to liability related to COVID.
- Some additional recommendations include making Louisiana the training capital of the country in terms of Advanced Manufacturing and skilled craft professionals; reinstate or extend the State's Historic Tax Credit; tax credits for retrofitting building; a tax incentive for creating healthy and sanitary features in building.
- He also discussed building performance for State owned buildings, including implementing value added components to state buildings in order to reduce greenhouse emissions, as the urban built environment is responsible for 75 % of annual global greenhouse gases. This initiative would stimulate economic activity while saving significantly on energy costs.
- Another long-term recommendation is to focus portions of FEMA and CDBG funding for Master Planning for resilience in local communities, and increase vertical and horizontal infrastructure spending. This includes increasing state and federal funding for capital improvements on highway, bridge, drainage, water, ports and more, and address deferred maintenance in state owned buildings.
- He closed with sharing the pandemic's exposure of health disparities, which the task force feels should be a true opportunity to rethink how communities, housing parks, streets and public facilities are planned and built. This encourages the modification of construction contract provisions for infectious diseases.
- Andrew Doss then turned the meeting over to questions from commissioners. Jim Richardson began and stated that, on liability issue, there was a bill passed in legislature and Governor signed it. He asked if that met some of the issues? Domoine said that if it's the one he's thinking of then it's a good start. Jim also asked if there were any estimates of cost or ROI regarding historic tax credit or the others that were mentioned. Domoine answered that he did not those estimates.
- Terrie Sterling asked about the role of affordable housing, secondly around wages in the construction industry and in contractors; What percentage of workforce is paid a living wage, has sick leave, has health insurance and are there efforts to diversify industry in terms of gender. Mike Polito answered It was discussed, it didn't get much traction with regard to having trouble finding people. He personally felt like that if the industry may

not be paying appropriate wages, but there was not consensus on that. There are improvements, and improvements can continue, but committee felt it was something that didn't need to be included in the report. We did not address women in construction, but the industry has done a good job as far as bringing women into the industry.

- Andrew opened the floor to questions from the public. There were no verbal questions from the public.
- Co-chair Pierson complimented the task force for their presentation.
- Andrew then ended the discussion and introduced Restaurant and Entertainment Task Force

Restaurant and Entertainment Task Force

- Task force co-chair Stan Harris began presentation and explained the smaller working groups. The task force was divided into Restaurants; Stadiums and Arenas; Parks and Recreation; and Community Facilities. He said that the process and smaller working group allowed members to get down the granular level of the industries and sectors.
- Speaking on behalf of the Restaurants task force sub group, Stan began by highlighting the value of the sector and its positive impact on various groups regardless of training or skillset. He said that the industry offers, for many, the first job, and for many others, the second, third or fourth chance. Its breadth can provide the flexibility of schedule and creativity and engagement.
- He continued that the full force of the COVID crisis has affected this industry so dramatically, and there was no plan in place for how to adapt or to triage. He said that restaurants and bars live off of cash flow, and when demand drops and when group events are prohibited, those restaurants that rely heavily on tourism may only be bringing in 50 percent of 70 percent of their annual revenue.
- He said that Louisiana industry leaders worked closely with national leaders on the CARES act, but even with extending the period from 8 months to 24, the industry may still not come close to expected receipts. This could lead to another reset this summer.
- The guidance and recommendations from the task force is to help businesses find resiliency and efficiency, find capital, to provide industry specific education opportunities and build a stronger workforce.

- Stan said that as broad as these recommendations are, they have to be representative of the diversity of the industry. Prior to this crisis, restaurants or bars together were either the second or third highest provider of jobs in the state, and most of these operations have sales of less than \$750,000. He also asked that the commission think of the owners and job creators and the risks they take.
- Dennis Lauscha spoke on behalf of Stadiums and Arenas, saying that the health and safety of the community is a primary concern. He shared that sports is fundamental to our society, generating millions for the State and thousands of jobs.
- He said what the pandemic has done to this industry is evident, with the ultimate cancellation of the NBA season, the Zurich Classic, Jazz Fest, and others, all of which would have been vital to the economy. These will result in financial loss to the owners of the sports venues, and to the state of Louisiana. Additionally, the cancellation of these events was evaluated in terms of tourism, advertising and PR for the state.
- These venues would not be as successful were it not for the people who run them, who are on the frontline taking tickets and working in concessions, and that task force wanted to make sure they are protected. For the participants, we have to make sure they are safe as well. Many of the recommendations included in the report have a lot to do with distancing, which will be a challenge, but we do believe there is a pathway to safety.
- Corey Wilson, co-leader of the task force overseeing parks and recreation system said that from the onset, parks were fortunate to see that outdoor activity was listed as an essential service. He emphasized that outdoor activity provides physical and medical benefits, and that the parks did see an increase in visitors.
- He said parks are not immune to covid-19, as gathering is not allowed, so a lot of those facilities were closed, including zoos. Recommendations include more signage in terms of making sure people remain physically distanced. Recommendations for employee safety includes taking temperatures and wiping surfaces. Recommendations to make parks and recreation more resilient include more virtual opportunities, like the ability to make online reservations where needed. From a federal stand point, they encourage fully funding the land and water conservation act.
- Larry Conner spoke on behalf of small operators, such as gyms and health club. He said that these small operators, are often the first jobs or part time jobs for many. The sector has been hit hard. Biggest part of year for the sector is the first half of year. The industry is coming back, but within the smaller studios, and noting that anything below 50 percent is really an issue. Moving forward the industry would like to adapt rather than

closing, such as cutting back, moving things outdoors. He said it is important to note that the sector is mostly made up of independent operators, and they had to furlough a lot of people. The industry wants to protect itself for the future, and members want the state to understand that it can adapt and modify. It's important to look at health clubs as a part of the solution, not part of the problem. He said gyms are taking cleanliness seriously, and the recommendation is to encourage the state to help us promote gyms as healthy living.

- Andrew Doss opened the meeting to questions. Tim Temple began by stating that there was a senate bill that gave restaurant industry some liability protection for employers, and he asked how important was that to the restaurants? Stan said that the bill is helpful, but it's not for employees, it's only for guests.
- Terrie Sterling asked who regulates children we see as street performers? Stan said he didn't know if they are regulated at all, but added that they are under a curfew. Terrie Sterling also said there are some states where the minimum wage is factored into the tip credit. Stan replied Louisiana follows the federal of \$2.15, but the employer has to pay the difference of the \$7.25.
- Ti Martin said that she hoped one of the takeaways is safety practices. She also shared that the entire industry wants to move toward becoming an employer of choice – training, advancement, paid leave, etc. – there is a big discussion that this involves and it's something the industry is looking at.
- Jade Brown-Russell echoed Ti's comments, and complimented the task force on a good, informative presentation. She said the notion that this industry provides the first job for some and the job of second chances drives the importance of this industry.
- Andrew asked for questions from the public
- Dorian Nunez recommended that the commission go to SBA and USDA to have idle money turned back on for restaurants, which are part of the Agribusiness sector.
- Andrew Doss thanked everyone for their participation, and said the commission would reconvene at 9 a.m. on Wednesday.
- Ti Martin motioned to adjourned. Tim Temple seconded

Meeting Adjourned at 11:15