

Subcommittee on Mental Health of House Committee on Health and Welfare

Minutes of Meeting
2023 Interim
September 26, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Laurie Schlegel, chairman of the Subcommittee on Mental Health of House Committee on Health and Welfare, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Laurie Schlegel, chairman
Representative Michael Charles Echols
Representative Jason Hughes
Representative Wayne McMahan
Representative Larry Selders
Representative Christopher Turner, vice chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Roy Daryl Adams
Representative Ed Larvadain, III
Representative Joseph A. Stagni

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristy Neubrandner, committee administrative assistant
Meah Johnson, attorney
Taylor Chrisman, attorney

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms
Nevonda Reed, division director

III. BUSINESS

Discussion on accessibility to mental healthcare services and the mental healthcare workforce shortage by the following invited boards and associations:

Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselors Board of Examiners

Roy A. Salgado, Jr., Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselors Board of Examiners, 11410 Lake Sherwood Avenue North, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70816, spoke for information only. Mr. Salgado addressed the challenges Louisiana citizens face when wanting to access quality mental health services.

Louisiana State Board of Nursing

Karen Lyon, Louisiana State Board of Nursing, 17373 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke for information only and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records. She provided an overview of the challenges faced by psychiatric nurses in Louisiana.

Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners

Patricia Wilton, Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (LSBME), 630 Camp Street, New Orleans, LA, 70130, spoke for information only. She furnished the committee with data on the number of psychiatric healthcare professionals within the state.

In response to questions from the committee, Ms. Wilton speculated that Louisiana could attract more practicing psychiatrists to the state if the medical schools would expand their programs and offer more residencies.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Louisiana State Coroner's Association

Gerald "Gerry" Cvitanovich, Louisiana State Coroner's Association (LSCA), 5555 Hilton Avenue, Suite 420, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only. He suggested that the work of the coroners serves as a valuable barometer for evaluating the overall mental health treatment system in the state.

William "Chuck" Credo III, LSCA, 5555 Hilton Avenue, Suite 420, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only. Mr. Credo discussed how coroners are funded in comparison with other states in our region.

Representative McMahon asked the panel if the coroner systems in neighboring states operate similarly to the one in Louisiana. Mr. Credo replied that they are different and cited the coroner systems in Texas and Mississippi as examples.

Louisiana Counseling Association

Representative Schlegel announced that there was not a representative from the Louisiana Counseling Association present.

Louisiana Psychological Association

Jesse D. Lambert, Louisiana Psychological Association, 1201 South Purpera Avenue, Suite 302, Gonzales, LA 70737, spoke for information only. He reported on the difficulties of funding psychological care within the Medicaid and Medicare systems.

Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association

Lee Tynes, Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association, Tulane Psychiatry, 1440 Canal Street, 10th Floor, New Orleans, LA 70112, spoke for information only and presented a slideshow, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners

Melissa Nunn, Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners (LANP), 235 10th Street, New Orleans, LA 70124, spoke for information only. She provided an overview of the education, licensure, and scope of practice of psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners in Louisiana.

Erica Joseph, LANP, 59210 Island Drive, Plaquemine, LA 70764, spoke for information only. Ms. Joseph discussed the scope of practice of psychiatric nurse practitioners and shared with the committee her experiences as a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Abby McNeil, Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners, 1060 Fox Sparrow Loop, Madisonville, LA 70447, spoke for information only. Ms. McNeil told the committee that she serves as a psychiatric nurse practitioner and shared with the committee the challenges she faces when working with children who have mental health issues.

In response to questions from the committee, Ms. McNeil explained that psychiatric nurse practitioners must have a collaborator who is a medical doctor and that finding a qualified collaborator is difficult.

National Association of Social Workers – Louisiana Chapter

Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers – Louisiana Chapter, 810 West 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701, spoke for information only and presented a slideshow, Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

Cassandra Smith, Louisiana Association of Clinical Social Workers, 750 Florida Street, #1046, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, spoke for information only. She spoke about the challenges that clinical social workers face in Louisiana, emphasizing the lack of uniformity among Managed Care Organizations as a significant issue.

Laura Calhoun, 6743 Chaparral Place, Central, LA 70739, spoke for information only. She addressed specific issues she has with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Mary L. Buck, 18609 Greenwell Springs Road, Apartment 26, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739, spoke for information only. She addressed specific concerns and issues she has with DCFS.

Maggie Buck, 805 Preval Street, Mandeville, LA 70448, spoke for information only. She addressed specific concerns and issues she has with DCFS.

Tarah Tulsion, 805 Preval Street, Mandeville, LA 70448, spoke for information only. She addressed specific concerns and issues she has with DCFS.

Louisiana Academy of Physician Assistants

Sarah Deyo, Louisiana Academy of Physician Assistants, 9655 Perkins Road, Suite C, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke for information only. Ms. Deyo spoke about the education, training, and scope of practice for physician assistants. She also discussed barriers that impact patient care for physician assistants.

Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists

Dr. Michelle Moore, Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, 4334 Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70816, spoke for information only. She spoke about the obstacles psychologists face due to the Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Representative Schlegel invited those in attendance who wished to provide public testimony unrelated to items on the agenda to address the committee.

Tony Landry, Veterans Action Council, 805 Genevieve Drive, Lafayette, LA 70503, spoke for information only. He advocated for the use of natural plant medicines like cannabis, ayahuasca,

ibogaine, psilocybin, and other psychedelic plants and fungi to treat addiction, depression, and anxiety.

Lonnie Granier, Coalition of Louisiana Addiction Services and Prevention Providers, 1125 North Tonti Street, New Orleans, LA 70119, spoke for information only. He commented on the current state of the addiction workforce in Louisiana and overall access to substance use disorder treatment services.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 2 for information only. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Schlegel announced that the next meeting of the Subcommittee on Mental Health will be on Tuesday, October 17, 2023.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Hughes offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 6 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Schlegel, Echols, Turner, Selders, McMahan, and Hughes voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Laurie Schlegel
Subcommittee on Mental Health of House Committee on Health and Welfare

Date adopted: March 21, 2024