



Jeff Landry
Governor

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR DRUG POLICY

Dr. Shayla Polk, LCSW
Executive Director
Cortalya Muse
Prevention Systems Manager

DRUG POLICY BOARD April 23, 2026; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM LA State Capitol Building, 4th Floor Press Room, 900 N. Third St., Baton Rouge

MINUTES

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Polk at 10:30 AM due to technical difficulties.

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Polk welcomed attendees, followed by introductions from members and attendees.

Old Business

- A. The minutes from the January 2026 meeting were presented for review.
A motion was made by Dr. Emily Tilley and seconded by Dr. Allison Smith to approve the minutes.
The motion passed.

New Business

A. Legislative Update -Dr. Shayla Polk

Dr. Shayla Polk provided a legislative update on several bills from the 2026 Regular Session that supports Louisiana's drug policy and impaired driving initiatives. The following legislation was highlighted:

- HB 69 – Rep. Debbie Villio: Relating to ignition interlock device offenses.
- HB 82 – Rep. Debbie Villio: Relating to penalties for DWI offenses.
- HB 492 – Rep. Annie Spell: Codifying the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving.
- SB 118 – Sen. Gerald Boudreaux: Providing for substance use disorder screening for all misdemeanor DWI offenders.

Dr. Polk noted that the passage of these measures strengthens Louisiana's efforts to address impaired driving, expand substance use disorder screening, and enhance statewide coordination of drug policy initiatives.

B. Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act- Dr. Shayla Polk

Dr. Shayla Polk provided an update on the Governor's Office of Drug Policy's participation in the development of the Model State Office of Drug Control Policy Act. She shared that the model legislation, published by the Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA) with support from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), provides a framework for states to establish centralized offices to coordinate drug control policy across prevention, treatment, enforcement, education, and recovery. Dr. Polk also reported that she served on the national working group responsible for developing the model legislation, representing Louisiana alongside representatives from several other states. She noted that Louisiana's existing statutory framework served as a key resource in shaping the model legislation, reflecting the state's leadership and expertise in drug policy.

C. *Emerging Drug Trends Among Youth: Implications for Policy, Prevention, and Public Awareness - Dr. Shayla Polk, Director, Office of Drug Policy.*

Dr. Polk presented an overview of emerging drug trends among youth and their implications for policy, prevention, and public awareness. She began by outlining a seven-point strategic framework: raising awareness, advocating for resources, facilitating dialogue and collaboration, promoting evidence-based policymaking, engaging communities, empowering youth, and promoting international cooperation.

She reviewed the leading substances currently affecting youth. Nicotine, including disposable vapes, high-concentration pods, and fast-growing nicotine pouches, remains the number one access point into substance use, with approximately 21% of 12th graders reporting past-year vaping. Cannabis remains the most common illicit drug among youth, with about 1 in 10 teens reporting past-year use; she noted that THC potency is significantly higher than in previous decades while perception of harm is decreasing. Alcohol remains among the top three substances used (roughly 42% of 12th graders reporting past-year use), though usage is declining overall. Approximately 14% of high school students report misuse of prescription opioids, often hidden and tied to academic pressure.

Dr. Polk emphasized that fentanyl and counterfeit pills represent the deadliest risk, with fentanyl involved in roughly 80% of youth overdose deaths, as teens frequently believe they are taking Percocet or Xanax when the pills are fentanyl-laced counterfeits. She also highlighted emerging substances for 2025–2026, including nicotine pouches, Delta-8 and synthetic THC products in a legal gray area, rising attention to hallucinogens and party drugs (MDMA, psilocybin, ketamine), and small but concerning increases in stimulant use.

She also stressed that youth are being exposed earlier to more potent substances with greater consequences and called for investment in prevention. She outlined strategies to raise awareness, empower communities, facilitate cross-sector dialogue and data sharing, and empower youth as partners in prevention. She described the continuum of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation and reviewed evidence-based prevention approaches, including prevention guidelines, family skills programs, and life and social skills development.

Dr. Polk concluded by announcing the Substance Misuse, Mental Health, and Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol, scheduled for May 7, 2026, from 10 AM to 12 PM in the Louisiana State Capitol Press Room, featuring two hours of interactive, youth-focused engagement with tables covering substance use awareness, mental health, and suicide prevention.

Other Business

A. Office of Drug Policy updates

Dr. Shayla Polk provided a brief update on the Office of Drug Policy and provided updates on several upcoming events. She shared information about the Men's Wellness Conference planned for May, the upcoming Youth Wellness Summit, June 12th, and the Youth-Centered Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Day scheduled for July 1, 2026, at the Louisiana State Capitol. She encouraged members to promote these events and support participation within their respective communities.

B. Member Agency updates

Member agencies provided updates on ongoing initiatives and activities within their respective agencies.

Public Comment

Public comments were received.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dr. Emily Tilley and seconded by Charmaine Marchand. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

DRUG POLICY BOARD VOTING MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance	Not in Attendance	Proxy
Alcohol industry representative	Kody Thompson	Yes		
Attorney General's Office	Michael Dupree, Public Protection Division (John Kelley Proxy-Complex Litigation Officer)	Yes		
Board of Pharmacy	Marty McKay (Joe Fontenot proxy)			No
District Court Judge	Shayna Beevers Morvant	Yes		
Federal agency with AOD ed/ treat/Prev responsibilities	Dr. Leslie Faulkner	Yes		
Board of Regents	Dr. Allison Smith	Yes		
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Dr. Shayla Polk, Director and Chair of the Drug Policy Board	Yes		
House member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Rhonda Butler, LA State Representative, Dist. 38		No	
O'Brien House	Dr. Emily Tilley	Yes		
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement	Brittany Onezine	Yes		
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services	Dr. Rebecca Hook (Amy Holland as proxy)	Yes		
Louisiana Department of Education	Stephen Guccione	Yes		
Louisiana Department of Health	Quinetta Womack(Proxy Leslie Freeman)			Yes
Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections	Shelley Edgerton	Yes		
Louisiana District Attorneys Association	J. Collin Simms (Elizabeth Authement as Proxy)	Yes		
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman, JD	Yes		
Louisiana Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control	Chad Brown (Charmaine Marchand as proxy)			Yes
Louisiana Public Defenders Board	Remy Starns, JD (Jessica Exkano as proxy)			Yes
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Shannon Dirmann		No	
Louisiana State Police	Rebecca Chiasson	Yes		
National Guard	Lt. Colonel Beverly Coutto, Coordinator, Counterdrug Program (Joshua Blossom as proxy)			Yes
Physician	Peter W. Croughan, MD, LA Department of Health		No	
Louisiana Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office	Fletcher D. Hyacinth	Yes		
Senate member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Senator Bob Owens- District 1		No	
Avenues Recovery	Matthew Engler	Yes		
TOTAL PRESENT		20(Quorum was achieved)		

OF-COUNCIL MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance
LA State Board of Medical Examiners	Dr. Vincent Culotta	No
North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory	Joseph O. Jones, System Director	Yes
Baton Rouge Field	Steven Hofer, Asst. Special Agent in Charge	No
ADAPT, Inc.	Thomas R. "Rusty" Fornea, Executive Director (Regina Meyerchick Proxy)	Yes
Seymore D'Fair Foundation-Ofc	Dara Lemoine-Johnson (Craig Wiles Proxy)	Yes
Drug Enforcement Administration, NOLA Office	Keith Bakewell	No
Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area	Greg Lowther	No

STAFF

Cortalya Muse, Governor's Office

GUESTS

Catherine Childers -Louisiana Highway

Safety Commission

Valerie Garrett- 15th JDC Judge

Levillar Moore- LDOE

Jacqueline Sanchez- LDAA

Dana Wilkosz- CDC Foundation

Jackie Mims- Eclectic Cognitive

Behavioral

Shannon Robertson- Louisiana Primary

Care Association

Melinda Williams – OBH

Ashley Tillison -LSU SREC Kristina

Little – LSU SREC

Dr. William Harrison AAAP/ORN

Mark Hiatt- NOPD Crime Lab

Megan Bella- DOC

John Parker- LYAC