



Jeff Landry  
Governor

# State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
DRUG POLICY

Dr. Shayla Polk, LCSW  
Executive Director

## DRUG POLICY BOARD April 18, 2024; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### MINUTES

#### Call to Order

Shayla Polk, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and Chair of the Drug Policy Board, called the meeting to order at 10:17AM

#### Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Polk welcomed everyone to the second quarterly meeting of the Drug Policy Board. She introduced Cortalya Muse, M.S., B.S., as the new Prevention Systems Manager. Cortalya Muse expressed her happiness to join the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and the Office of Behavioral Health. Dr. Polk then asked new council and board members to introduce themselves and their agencies, followed by a roll call for Voting and Of-Counsel members seated around the table. She invited stakeholders and members of the public to introduce themselves as well. After the introductions, Dr. Polk announced that quorum was achieved. A list of all members and stakeholders who attended the meeting is included at the end of the document.

#### Old Business

- *Review and approve minutes from previous meeting*

Dr. Polk asked everyone to refer to the minutes that were emailed prior to the meeting. While doing that, she reminded everyone that a copy of the minutes were in their packets. After a moment of silence to review, Dr. Polk asked if there were any edits or amendments to be made. A motion to approve was raised. Vote by voice was made. All who were present agreed with the motion. None disagreed. None abstained.

#### New Business

##### **A. *Presentations with Open Discussions: O'Brien House Saving Lives and Families Saving Lives and Families - Emily George Tilley, LCSW-BACS, LAC, Executive Director at O'Brien House***

Emily Tilley who serves as the Executive Director of O'Brien house gave an in-depth overview of O'Brien House. O'Brien House is a residential substance abuse facility treating indigent adult males and females. It was established in 1971 and is named after Paul S. "Pat" O'Brien. She shared that O'Brien House's mission is to "save lives and families from alcoholism and drug abuse through residential treatment and community outreach." She further stated that O'Brien House is an effective, quality organization that supports ongoing recovery for all and returns clients to mainstream society. It is led by a committed community board, a competent and dedicated staff, and an active alumni network. Additionally, it is widely recognized, respected,

and supported by the community with a broad base of financial support.

Emily also spoke on the core values of O'Brien House, emphasizing caring for each person, open-mindedness to others, and acceptance of the individual. She highlighted the importance of confidentiality among staff and clients, alongside honesty and sobriety as a way of life. The organization upholds respect for each individual and practices unconditional love. Additionally, she noted that spirituality and a dependence on a Higher Power are central to their values. Emily explained her connection to O'Brien House. She mentioned that she was born and raised in New Iberia, LA, to parents who struggled with addiction. Her mother was a client of O'Brien House, which is how the organization became like family to her.

Emily stated that more than 100,000 people die from addiction in the United States annually. She highlighted the problems beyond addiction and the challenge of attaining long-term sobriety and successful reintegration into society since typical rehabilitation programs sometimes lack a focus on comprehensive recovery approaches. She shared that O'Brien House offers prevention, education, assessment, and recovery support programs, such as residential treatment beds, outpatient and intensive outpatient treatment programs, the Adult Substance Education Program (ASEP) as part of the District Attorney's DWI Diversion Program, grief counseling, spiritual support, recreational therapy, prevention classes, educational services, relapse prevention, life skills, psychoeducation, and recovery dynamics.

She highlighted their programs, which include community outreach and education through health fairs, educational seminars, and sexual prevention education. Additionally, they offer the Lions Quest/IMPACT program, which encompasses mentoring, a bullying program for middle school-aged children, home-based substance abuse and bullying prevention, coping skills strategies, and peer development.

Emily also spoke on the demographics that treat and the goals and objectives of their treatment programs. In doing so, she stated that in their residential substance abuse treatment facilities, they encounter complex problems that go beyond simply stopping substance use. She shared that some clients lack basic necessities such as clothing, hygiene products, and important documents like social security cards. Medicaid authorizations are insufficient to cover treatment costs, often leading dedicated employees to use their own money to ensure essential resources are available to help meet the clients' needs. She anticipates that over 275 residential and outpatient clients will be impacted during 2024-2025 due to a lack of funding.

***B. Alcohol Awareness Month A Small Presentation – Dr. Shayla Polk, Executive Director, Office of Drug Policy***

Dr. Polk shared with the board and community members that April was Alcohol Awareness Month. In her presentation, she explained that this month is used to address the stigma surrounding alcoholism and substance abuse. Dr. Polk also highlighted the Louisiana Partnerships for Success Grant II (LaPFSII), emphasizing its foundation in addressing the state's diverse population and tackling substantial issues in substance abuse and mental health. LaPFSII is administered through the Office of Behavioral Health and the Louisiana Department of Health and collaborates closely with the Office of Drug Policy. Its initiatives focus on reducing underage drinking and prescription drug misuse and abuse. Goals include preventing the onset and reducing the progression of these behaviors. Specific prevention priorities were underage drinking among 12-20 year olds and prescription drug misuse/abuse among 12-25 year olds.

Dr. Polk also shared various community resources during the presentation. These included "Facts About Teen Drinking," a website designed to educate teens about the health effects of alcohol, signs of alcohol problems, and how to seek help. She highlighted the NIAA for Middle

School, offering interactive activities for parents, caregivers, and teachers to address peer pressure and resistance skills related to underage drinking. Another resource discussed was "Alcohol and Your Brain: A Virtual Reality Experience," which used engaging visuals and narration to deliver educational messages. Additionally, Dr. Polk mentioned a Kahoot! Quiz on Underage Drinking, providing information on health consequences, signs of alcohol problems, and support options. Lastly, she introduced the Alcohol Awareness Toolkit, aimed at raising awareness and advocating for effective alcohol policies through various educational materials and advocacy tools.

Dr. Polk encouraged everyone to actively participate in Alcohol Awareness Month with a call to action. These initiatives include Alcohol-Free Weekend at the start of April, promoting abstaining from alcohol for 72 hours. She emphasized starting conversations about alcohol misuse, educating about risks like binge drinking and signs of dependence, and the importance of seeking help. Dr. Polk also recommended educating younger generations on peer pressure and alcohol dangers, hosting alcohol-free social events, and learning about alcohol use disorder impacts. She encouraged individuals in attendance to share their knowledge via social media, blogs, or talks, and to support awareness through local events or contributions to relevant organizations. She concluded by stressing the impact of individual involvement in raising awareness and supporting those in need.

A copy of the presentation are available upon request.

**C. 2024 Legislative Session: Tracking drug policy related bills – Dr. Shayla Polk, Executive Director, Office of Drug Policy**

Dr. Polk, informed all attendees that included in their packet was the entire list of bills that the Drug Policy Board was tracking. She shared that she would not be covering all the bills but wanted to give brief update on specific bills that were being tracked. The bills include the following:

- HB 53: Provides relative to the limitation of actions by passengers of motor vehicles
- HB 54: CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES: Provides relative to the regulation of cannabis
- HB 204: Adds substances to the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law
- HB 370: Allows any wine producer or manufacturer to sell sparkling and still wine on or off premises and ship directly to a consumer
- HB 621:Enforces a \$500.00 fine as it pertains to Vape products
- HB 776: Provides relative to the terminology and elements of particular offenses involving operation of a vehicle when the offender is intoxicated
- HB 830: Adds Tianeptine to Schedule I of the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substance Law
- HB 952: Provides relative to consumable hemp products
- SB 224: Provides relative to opioid alternatives
- SB 291: Increases the minimum age of bartenders
- HB 720: Provides relative to distribution of fentanyl under certain circumstances

## **Other Business**

### ***A. Office of Drug Policy updates***

Dr. Shayla announced that Governor Jeff Landry signed the Executive Order reestablishing the Governor's Task Force on Driving While Impaired. She stated it was a great way to start off the Easter weekend.

### ***B. Member agency updates***

No member agency updates.

### ***Public Comments***

There were no public comments.

### ***Upcoming Meetings***

- State Epidemiology Workgroup - (TBD)
- DWI Task Force – May 29, 2024 (10 AM – 12 pm) LA Capitol 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Press Room
- Prevention Systems Committee - (TBD)
- Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Council (TBD)
- Drug Policy Board – July 18, 2024(10 AM – 12 pm)

### ***Adjournment***

***Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 P.M.***

**DRUG POLICY BOARD**  
**February, 15, 2023 Regular Business Meeting**

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	Present		
		Yes	No	Proxy
Alcohol industry representative	Vacant			
Attorney General's Office	Mike Dupree	X		
Board of Pharmacy	Joe Fontenot, Executive Director (Standing Proxy for Marty McKay)	X		
District Court Judge	Hon. Shayna Beevers Morvant		X	
Federal agency with AOD ed/treatment/prev responsibilities	Vacant			
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Dr. Shayla Polk, Director and Chair of the Drug Policy Board	X		
House member, Health & Welfare Committee	Rep. Stephanie Berault, LA State Representative, District 76		X	
Louisiana Commission on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse	Vacant/Commission no longer exists			
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement	Linda Gautier, Federal Grants Section Manager	X		
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services	Dr. Rebecca Hook-Director of Medical Services	X		
Louisiana Department of Education	Michael Comeaux, Healthy Communities Section Lead	X		
Louisiana Department of Health	Quinetta Womack, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Behavioral Health	X		
Louisiana Department of Corrections	Blake LeBlanc, Mental/Behavioral Health Director	X		
Louisiana District Attorneys Association	Vacant			
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman, JD, Executive Director	X		
Louisiana Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control	Ernest Legier, JD, Commissioner (Paola A. Ochea as proxy)	X		
Louisiana Public Defenders Board	Remy Starns, JD, State Public Defender		X	
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Shannon Dirmann, JD, Counsel and Legislative Liaison		X	
Louisiana State Police	Rebecca Chiasson, Chemistry Manager, Crime Lab	X		
National Guard	Lt. Col. Beverly Couto, Coordinator, Counterdrug Program (MSgt Amy Thomas as proxy)	X		
Physician	Vacant			
Private org involved in substance abuse prevention	Dan Schneider, Tunnel of Hope	X		
Senate member, Health & Welfare Committee	Hon. Robert "Bob" Owen, LA State Senate District 1		X	
<b>TOTAL PRESENT</b>		<b>13</b>		

(Quorum was achieved)

**STAFF**

Cortalya Muse, Governor's Office

**GUESTS**

Judge Jules Edwards – District Court Judge

Jacqueline Sanchez – DAA

Lonnie Granier, Odyssey House Louisiana

Emily Tilley – O'Brian House

Dara Johnson – Seymore's Foundation

David Johnson - Seymore's Foundation

Allison Smith - Board of Regents

Rusty Fornea – ADAPT, INC.

Joey Jones – North LA Crime Lab

Tara Mars-Lorraine - LPCA

David McKay - LDH – Legal

José Calderón-Abbo, M.D. FASAM

Grant Scheeringa – LDOJ

Caitlin Chapman LDH/OPH

Leslie Freeman – OBH