



John Bel Edwards
Governor

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DRUG POLICY

Kristy Miller
Director

Dr. Shayla Polk
Prevention Systems Manager

DRUG POLICY BOARD October 26, 2023; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Kristy Miller, Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and Chair of the Drug Policy Board, called the meeting to order at 10:00AM

Welcome and Introductions

Kristy moved on to introductions. Kristy did a roll call for Voting and Of-Counsel members seated around the table. She then asked Voting and Of-Counsel members to introduce themselves. Then, stakeholders and members of the public were introduced. After introductions, she announced 13 members were presented and that quorum was achieved. A list of all members and stakeholders who attended the meeting is included at the end of this document.

Old Business

- *Review and approve minutes from previous meeting*

Kristy 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, Kristy asked if there were any edits or amendments to be made. A motion was made to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded. All who were present agreed with the motion. None disagreed. None abstained.

New Business

A. Remarks: Administrative Transition – Kristy Miller and Dr. Chaunda Mitchell, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

Kristy shared that her career was dedicated to substance abuse prevention, focusing on improving systems related to underage drinking, collegiate binge drinking, prescription drug misuse, and illicit drug use. Kristy shared that she believed joining the Governor's Office of Drug Policy was the pinnacle of her career, which continued until her promotion to Director in December 2021. In this role, she assumed responsibilities as DPB Chair, a voting member of the DWI Task Force, and a voting member of the DARE Advisory Board and the Drug Control and Violent Crime Policy Board under the Commission on Law Enforcement.

Kristy stated that, serving her state in this capacity was both "gratifying and humbling." She then proceeded to highlight the most impactful accomplishments of the Drug Policy Board during Governor Edwards's two terms in office which includes the following:

- The Drug Policy Board and its Standing Committees, Prevention Systems Committee, and State Epidemiology Workgroup were actively involved in the development of the 2017-2021 Louisiana Substance Abuse Prevention Strategic Plan, a 5-year plan that outlined how drug policy stakeholders would maintain and improve the infrastructure to make impactful change in substance abuse rates across the state.
- During the 2017 legislative session, the Drug Policy Board worked closely with legislators to ensure the creation of the Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE Council), which was housed under the DPB. Over the proceeding 3 years, the Drug Policy Board advocated for numerous legislative and administrative actions to establish and/or improve systems-level responses to the opioid epidemic;
- The Drug Policy Board advocated to Governor Edwards to reestablish the Governor's Task Force on DWI. It was enacted in February 2018 through Executive Order JBE 18-03. Since that time, the DWI Task Force became a driving force behind improvements in alcohol and drug-impaired driving behaviors across the state.
- Since 2018, the Drug Policy Board identified and engaged with numerous new stakeholder groups. Several of the most impactful were the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the LA Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office, the LA State Board of Medical Examiners, the North Louisiana Criminalistics Lab, and star of the Netflix's docuseries The Pharmacist Dan Schneider. These and many other groups became vitally important advisors to the board and the Office of Drug Policy.'
- In July 2018, the Drug Policy Board greenlit a proposal by the Prevention Systems Committee to study the impacts of medical, decriminalized, and legalized marijuana. This study eventually led to the composition of an issue brief on the impact of marijuana legalization. Through presentations, issue brief updates, reference to news articles, and information provided by numerous experts, the Drug Policy Board created and adopted four policy positions related to marijuana. The first was adopted in November 2019 and focused on DPB's opposition to any legislation that would set any THC per se level in blood for impaired driving until there was a consensus within the scientific community to support a defined level. In January 2022, the DPB again adopted a policy position, this time to oppose the Legalization of Marijuana for Recreational Use in Louisiana. This policy position, along with Kristy's role serving on a study committee of the House Criminal Justice committee, ultimately led to the Drug Policy Board serving as a key stakeholder in resisting efforts to legalize marijuana for recreational use in Louisiana.
- In 2022, the Drug Policy Board and its Standing Committees, Prevention Systems Committee, and State Epidemiology Workgroup, actively engaged in updating the 2022-2026 Louisiana Substance Abuse Prevention Strategic Plan.
- In 2023, the Drug Policy Board was instrumental in bringing to the attention of elected officials and other key stakeholders the unintended consequences of the state's approach to consumable hemp-derived products. We created and adopted a policy position to regulate the processing and sale of intoxicating hemp products in Louisiana. Our attention to this issue ensured that the Drug Policy Board was considered a source of credible, science-based information and will surely continue to be consulted regarding future regulations.

Kristy then went on to welcome Dr. Chaunda Mitchell for remarks, expressing gratitude for her exceptional leadership. Kristy shared that in March 2016, Chaunda was invited to join Governor Edwards' staff as Director of Drug Policy. They needed someone who was highly skilled at organizing and leading a diverse group of stakeholders. They needed someone who was a master at representing a focus area that can be highly controversial and emotionally charged. They needed someone who was an adept strategist, an effective advocate, and a consensus builder. Kristy acknowledged that Dr. Mitchell fulfilled all these

roles and more for the Office of Drug Policy, all of its boards and commissions, and the entire Office of the Governor. She spoke on behalf of everyone, expressing appreciation for Dr. Mitchell's leadership and guidance. Ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Chaunda Allen Mitchell, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor John Bel Edwards, will now share her remarks.

B. Remarks: Administrative Transition –Dr. Chaunda Mitchell, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

Dr. Mitchell announced the recognition of individuals who played pivotal roles in the Board's work and demonstrated unwavering commitment to the mission of reducing substance abuse and misuse across the state. Notable mentions included Dr. Leslie Freeman, Cathy Childers, Dr. Murelle Harrison, Dortha Cummins, Dr. Leslie Faulkner, Judge Jules Edwards, and Dr. Janice Williams.

Dr. Mitchell highlighted the vital contributions of voting and of-counsel members, emphasizing their response to the call to serve as the heart of civic duty. She then informed the attendees about a small token of appreciation for each individual—a Certificate of Recognition honoring their dedication and commitment to the Drug Policy Board, signed by Governor Edwards.

The text read aloud was as follows: "This certificate of recognition is awarded to [Name] in acknowledgment of your unyielding dedication and commitment to the prevention of substance misuse and abuse and the associated negative consequences to individuals, families, communities, and the great state of Louisiana through improvements in drug policy by virtue of your role as a board member of the Governor's Drug Policy Board. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 26th day of October 2023. Signed John Bel Edwards, Governor."

C. Presentations: Drug Trends Across Louisiana through a Toxicological Lens

- ***Perspectives from the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab – Rebecca Chiasson, M.S., Chemistry Manager***

Rebecca provided updates on the Louisiana State Police (LSP) Crime Lab during the meeting: In the first quarter of 2023, validation and training were completed on two new instruments called OrbiTraps, which are high-resolution, accurate-mass (HRAM) mass spectrometers. In April 2023, the toxicology unit's blood confirmation list expanded from 121 drugs to 185 drugs (other than ethyl alcohol). Examples of drugs added included mitragynine, bromazolam, xylazine, and para-fluorofentanyl.

Bromazolam, added to the toxicology confirmation list in April 2023, is often seen in counterfeit pharmaceuticals. It is a central nervous system (CNS) depressant and was reported out 57 times in 2023 by the LSPCL Drug Unit. However, this is considered very low because it is at the analyst's discretion to report it, as it is not a controlled dangerous substance (CDS). For the months of April, May, and June, bromazolam was reported out 1 time (>1%), compared to alprazolam, which was reported out 56 times (14%). In July, August, and September, bromazolam was reported out 32 times (6.5%), as compared to alprazolam, which was reported out 63 times (13%).

Regarding Rilmazafone, it has not been seen in the drug unit, but if it gains popularity, it will eventually be seen in the seized drug unit and added to the tox confirmation list at that time.

Rebecca went over the 2023 data of all blood alcohol concentration (BAC) samples per range, noting a total of 2,093 BAC released, with 736 negative or 0.01g% (35%). She also provided information on polydrug use data, stating that when combining the BAC with the tox results, 77% of samples analyzed by the LSPCL had two or more impairing substances (0.02g% or more) year-to-date in 2023. She also shared several case studies that backed up the data, providing real-world examples to illustrate and contextualize the information presented. In addition to the statistical analysis, these case studies offered a practical understanding of the implications of the data within specific scenarios and investigations.

- ***Perspectives from the North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory – Joey Jones, M.S -System Director***

Joey shared the continued growth of central nervous system (CNS) depressants, specifically MNPS benzodiazepines. He provided insights into how problems related to narcotics and stimulants often lead to depressive issues. Joey also delved into the details of Rilazafone, shedding light on its metabolism process. Notably, Rilazafone is not classified in the United States, and Joey elucidated its relevance within the context of the broader substance landscape.

In addition to discussing specific substances, Joey presented a comprehensive overview of the top 10 toxicology results. These results included THC-COOH, THC, methamphetamine, amphetamine, cannabinoids-urine, gabapentin, fentanyl, alprazolam, benzoylecgonine, and hydrocodone. The detailed examination of these toxicology results offered valuable insights into prevalent substances and patterns observed in the samples analyzed by North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory

D. Event Recap: Louisiana Impaired Driving Symposium – the first-ever event of its kind hosted by the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and the Office of Drug Policy – Lisa Freeman, Executive Director, LHSC

Lisa Freeman, the Executive Director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC), provided a comprehensive recap of the Louisiana Impaired Driving Symposium, marking it as the first-ever event of its kind jointly hosted by LHSC and the Office of Drug Policy. The symposium aimed to address critical issues related to impaired driving and promote a collaborative approach towards enhancing road safety.

The symposium unfolded as a milestone event, bringing together diverse stakeholders and experts to share knowledge, insights, and strategies to tackle impaired driving in the state. The unique collaboration between LHSC and the Office of Drug Policy underscored the importance of a multi-agency approach in addressing the complex challenges associated with impaired driving. She highlighted the significance of the symposium in fostering dialogue, exchanging expertise, and establishing a foundation for future collaborative efforts to create safer roadways in Louisiana. The event's success was evident in its ability to draw a substantial number of participants, including VIPs, legislators, and nationally-renowned experts.

Lisa's recap shed light on the event's structure, featuring keynote presentations by experts, engaging panel discussions with Louisiana's public safety and impaired driving specialists, and a closing session emphasizing the promotion of a positive traffic safety culture. Lisa's summary highlighted the Louisiana Impaired Driving Symposium as a groundbreaking initiative that set the stage for ongoing efforts to combat impaired driving and enhance road safety throughout the state.

E. *Unveiling of latest Drug Brief: Inhale the Facts, Exhale the Myths: The Shocking Reality of Vaping – Dr. Shayla Polk, Prevention Systems Manager, Office of Drug Policy*

Polk unveiled the latest drug brief from the Department of Drug Policy, in collaboration with the Prevention Systems Committee. She shared alarming information about the blending of legal and illegal substances in vaporized form. Illustrating the deceptive strategies used by manufacturers, she displayed images of discreet vaping devices cleverly disguised as everyday items—such as ink pens, highlighters, hoodies, and watches.

Dr. Polk then provided insights into the vaping landscape in Louisiana at both state and federal levels, incorporating data from the Louisiana Department of Education. Stressing the urgency of community education, she issued a call to action for attendees to disseminate crucial information. She also shared that vaping had become the primary method through which teens were exposed to drugs, with the numbers on the rise. Dr. Polk concluded the brief with a strong message of making sure to share the information and educate others.

Other Business

F. *Office of Drug Policy updates* Kristy stated that the Office of Drug Policy had no additional updates as she had already shared the vision of the Drug Policy Board in hopes of its continuation.

G. *Member agency updates*

No member updates

H. *Public Comments*

No public comments.

I. *Upcoming Meetings*

Kristy informed everyone the Drug Policy Next Meeting Proposal
Thursday, February 8, 2024

Additional meeting recommendations:

* April 18, 2024

* July 18, 2024

* October 17, 2024

Adjournment

Kristy Miller thanked the attendees for their participation in the drug policy board.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

DRUG POLICY BOARD
October 26, 2023 Regular Business Meeting

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	Present		
		Yes	No	Proxy
Alcohol industry representative	Buddy Schilling, CEO, Schilling Distribution (Kody Thompson as proxy)	X		
Attorney General's Office	Chris Alderman, JD, Section Chief - Complex Litigation Unit		X	
Board of Pharmacy	Joe Fontenot, Executive Director (Standing Proxy for Marty McKay))		X	
District Court Judge	Honorable Scott Schlegel, 24 th JDC – Division D		X	
Federal agency with AOD ed/treatment/prev responsibilities	Vacant			
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Kristy Miller, Director and Chair of the Drug Policy Board	X		
House member, Health & Welfare Committee	Honorable Robert “Bob” Owen, LA State Representative, Dist. 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	Daniel Doyle, CSE Reg. Administrator/ Lead Area Manager Reg. 7	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	Warren Montgomery, JD, District Attorney, 22 nd Judicial District		X	
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman, JD, Executive Director	X		
Louisiana Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control	Ernest Legier, JD, Commissioner (Deatrice Henderson 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 (Capt. Frizzel Magee as proxy)	X		
Physician	Dr. Joseph Kanter, State Health Officer, LA Department of Health		X	
Private org involved in substance abuse prevention	Edward Carlson, Chief Executive Officer, Odyssey House Louisiana		X	
Senate member, Health & Welfare Committee	Honorable Gerald Boudreaux, LA State Senator, Dist. 24	X		
TOTAL PRESENT		13		

(Quorum was achieved)

STAFF

Shayla Polk, Governor's Office

GUESTS

Joey Jones – North LA Crime Lab

Jules Edwards - JOC

Kody Thompson – Alcohol Industry

Cathy Childers- LHSC

Aimee Moles - LSU

Ashley Tillison – LSU

Andrew Burns– LSU

Austin Matthews– LSU

Leslie Freeman – OBH/LDH

Theresa Pham- CDC Foundation

James Hussey – OBH/LDH

Muriell Harrison-PSC

Leslie Faulkner- DEA

Johanna Braud - LASC

Shelley Edgerton- Department of Corrections