

NORTHEAST DELTA HUMAN SERVICES AUTHORITY (NEDHSA)
Board Meeting MINUTES
May 20, 2025
NEDHSA Offices, Video Conference Room, 2513 Ferrand Street, Monroe, LA. 71201

5:30PM

Call to Order Meeting called to order by Yvonne Lewis and prayer was led by Yvonne Lewis and a quorum was met.

Adopt Agenda: A Motion was made by Thelma Merrells and seconded by Randy Williams to approve /accept the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Adopt Minutes of April 8, 2025: A Motion was made by Thelma Merrells and seconded by Christina Johnson to approve / accept the Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Members Present:

Thelma Merrells, Christina Johnson, Randy Williams and Yvonne Lewis

Board Absent: Dr. Tiffany Bates and Tasha Washington

Northeast Delta HSA staff present: Dr. Monteic Sizer, Nancy K. Falgoust
Law Firm LLC and Delores R. Harris

Ownership Linkage Recognition of Guest: None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – No requests for comment.

BOARD EDUCATION/ ENDS Items for DISCUSSION

Upcoming Events/Community Action

NEDHSA's legislative 2025 audit has begun. We anticipate another perfect to near perfect audit. We have been preparing for it, and all is smooth to date. Auditors will be finished soon. The Board will receive a complete copy of the final report.

NEDHSA 2024 annual programmatic report was presented to each board member, placed on NEDHSA's website, and will be disseminated to the general public this week. Board members also received NEDHSA's annual AMPAR report and 5 year strategic plan. These reports highlight NEDHSA's innovative, impactful regional work.

There is a Louisiana House bill seeking to remove LGE board authority and place Executive Directors under LDH and the Surgeon General. Rep. Michael Echols is the sponsor of HB 559. The first hearing of the bill was tabled due to lots of opposition and the bill not being informed relative to how LGEs currently function alongside LDH. LDH has not taken a formal position, and is not in favor of the bill per reports.

The Ouachita Parish town hall took place in Bawcomville April 8th from 11 am to 1 pm. NEDHSA will host the Bawcomville Bash: Faith, Hope, and Healing Festival Friday, May 23, 2025 from 10 am to 2 pm as a follow up. NEDHSA is working in partnership with Redeemed Calvary Church.

As part of NEDHSA's opioid harm reduction strategy, there will be 12 NARCAN boxes strategically placed regionally. NEDHSA staff placed one at its Tallulah Integrated Care Clinic and its Winnsboro location. The others are being placed as of this writing. More to come.

NEDHSA's annual Take Back Day recently removed 206 lbs. of used and unwanted prescriptions of the street. NEDHSA has 9 Take Back Boxes in 9 municipalities, to include city halls, sheriff offices, and police stations.

Drs. Sizer and Bhatta's behavioral and primary healthcare manuscript has been accepted for publication. There is no other LGE or state department publishing manuscripts in professional research journals. We have several manuscripts published in journals such as the highly respected American Journal of Medicine and several other notable ones. The manuscript under current review is titled Assessment of Mental and Physical Health Outcomes Over Time in an Integrated Care Setting.

NEDHSA implemented a very comprehensive EAP program for staff and their family members. This comprehensive system allows staff and family members to get individual counseling, money management tips, etc., from outside experts. NEDHSA staff participated in a health, wellness, and learning retreat. NEDHSA staff members are still discussing the great and relaxing time they had. Board members are eligible to use the comprehensive EAP program NEDHSA staff member's use.

NEDHSA has launched its veteran suicide campaign as part of its Operation Leave No Veteran Behind initiative. Suicide awareness lapel pins are part of this regional messaging effort. The campaign yielded more than 700k plus regional impressions.

Additionally, NEDHSA will host a pinning ceremony on Friday, May 9th at the Northeast Louisiana War Veterans Home from 1 pm to 2 pm.

NEDHSA's 3rd annual Art is Therapy Festival took place April 26, 2025 from 11 am to 3 pm. This was another highly impactful and well received mental health and wellness prevention effort. Several NEDHSA board members attended.

Construction will begin on NEDHSA's RISE facility in the coming days. RISE will be one of the largest inpatient hospitals in Louisiana for pregnant women who are mentally ill and addicted to substances (60 beds). Women who are admitted will be able to bring up to two dependent children with under the age of 12. Ochsner LSU Monroe is our primary care partner. NEDHSA is looking to cut the ribbon sometime between October 2025 and December 2025.

Dr. Sizer will be the keynote speaker during NAMI Louisiana 26th Annual State Conference entitled Changing Community Convention. His subject will be From Trauma to Purpose: A Collective Path Forward.

GOVERNANCE PROCESS/EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS for DECISIONS

Executive Director Report – Monthly Fiscal Report-Emergency Executive Succession Organizational Chart-

After the ED's report, Monthly Fiscal report was presented also the board reviewed the Emergency Executive Succession Organizational Chart, it was approved with no changes being made. A Motion made by Thelma Merrells and seconded by Christina Johnson to approve / accept as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Planning & Budgeting/Financial Condition and Activities – *With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition and activities, the ED shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities established in Ends policies.*

NEDHSA's FY25 appropriated budget is \$16,566,266 Our SGF = \$11,309,002. Our IAT = \$4,483,420. Self-generated = \$773,844.

Board -

Chairperson's Role (page 8) of the Governance Manual - Motion made by Randy Williams and seconded by Thelma Merrells to approve / accept as submitted with no changes. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MANAGEMENT – *Ongoing*

- Board Development

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURN

Next Meeting – **June 10, 2025 - 5:30 pm**

Ouachita Parish Health Unit, Community Room, 1560 DeSiard Street, Monroe, LA
71202