

**NORTHEAST DELTA HUMAN SERVICES AUTHORITY (NEDHSA)
Board Meeting MINUTES**

June 10, 2025

**Ouachita Parish Health Unit – Community Room
1650 DeSiard Street, Monroe, LA 71202**

5:30PM

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

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

Adopt Minutes of May 20, 2025: A Motion was made by Dr. Tiffany Bates and seconded by Thelma Merrells to approve / accept the Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Members Present:

Thelma Merrells, Dr. Tiffany Bates, Yvonne Lewis and Tasha Washington

Board Members Absent: Christina Johnson and Randy Williams

Northeast Delta HSA staff present: Dr. Monteic A. Sizer and Delores R. Harris

Ownership Linkage-Recognition of Guests: None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – No requests for comment.

BOARD EDUCATION/ ENDS Items for DISCUSSION

Upcoming Events/Community Action

NEDHSA's legislative 2025 audit has ended. We anticipate another perfect to near perfect audit. The Board will receive a complete copy of the final report.

NEDHSA Board members received NEDHSA's annual AMPAR report and 5 year strategic plan. These reports highlight NEDHSA's innovative, regional approach.

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. Currently, the bill is being negotiated by members of the House and Senate. The final version of the bill will likely keep LGE regional board autonomy and not place the Executive Directors under LDH. Rep. Echols' bill was

highly controversial and did not have broad legislative support. The version that's likely to pass is the one that took into consideration the feedback Executive Directors offered Rep. Echols and supported by both the House and Senate Health and Welfare Committees.

NEDHSA hosted its Bawcomville Bash: Faith, Hope, and Healing Festival Friday, May 23, 2025 from 10 am to 2 pm. NEDHSA worked in partnership with Redeemed Calvary Church. Because of NEDHSA's work, various agencies are seeking to partner to provide services in the Bawcomville community.

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. Additionally, NEDHSA has contracted with two regional groups to help provide narcotics anonymous, outreach, and transportation services for those addicted to opioids and related substances.

Drs. Sizer and Bhatta's behavioral and primary healthcare manuscript has been published. 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 just published is titled Assessment of Mental and Physical Health Outcomes Over Time in an Integrated Care Setting. The Mental Health Weekly also just featured this publication. This trade publication caters to hospital and insurance company CEOs, government leaders, research scientists, and elected officials.

NEDHSA 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 hosted a very successful pinning ceremony on Friday, May 9th at the Northeast Louisiana War Veterans Home from 1 pm to 2 pm. NEDHSA also hosted its Neighbors in Service honoring veterans at the Chennault Aviation & Military Museum on Saturday, May 31st.

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 was the keynote speaker during NAMI Louisiana's 26th Annual State Conference entitled Changing Community Convention. His subject was From Trauma to Purpose: A Collective Path Forward. The keynote address took place Thursday, June 5th.

NEHSA is hosting its annual JiggAerobics event Thursday, June 12th at the Monroe Downtown River market beginning at 6 pm. This is part of NEDHSA's health and wellness initiative.

GOVERNANCE PROCESS/EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS for DECISIONS

Executive Director – Monthly Activity and Fiscal Reports

After the ED's report was presented, along with monthly Fiscal data, a Motion made by Thelma Merrells and seconded by Tasha Washington to approve / accept the ED report and Fiscal reports 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 FY 25 appropriated budget is \$16,566,266. Our SGF = \$11,309,002. Our IAT = \$4,483,420. Self-generated = \$773,844

BOARD -

- Cost of Governance (Policy Manual Page 8-9)
- Agenda Planning (Policy Manual page 9)

A Motion was made by Tasha Washington and seconded by Thelma Merrells to approve /accept the Cost of Governance and Agenda Planning as submitted with no changes to the Governance Manual. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MANAGEMENT - Ongoing

- Board Members Terms/Renewal of Appointments
- Travel Expense Forms due by July 1, 2025 due to Fiscal year end

ADJOURN

Next Meeting – July 08, 2025

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