

Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Advisory Council Meeting  
And Serious Illness Coalition participation  
November 20, 2025

Attendees included (**bold indicates Palliative Care Council member**):

1. **Susan Nelson, MD Council Member**
2. Warren Hebert, Home Care Association
3. Jamey Boudreaux, LMHPCO
4. **Mary Raven, MD Council Member LSBME**
5. **Sonia Malhotra, MD Council Member LSBME**
6. Shelley Weaver, MSW, LA-NASW
7. **Dee Barfield, MD Council Member Insurance Plan Representative**
8. **Deborah Bourgeois, APRN, Council Member LSBN**
9. Michelle Jewell, Manager of Clinical Services for Louisiana Health Care Quality
10. **Kim Sullivan, Senior advisor to the LDH Secretary for Medicaid**
11. Cindy Munn, CEO of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum
12. Monique Tyler, LaPOST Coordinator with Louisiana Healthcare Quality Forum.
13. **Dr. Trey Gibson, Family Advocate, Council Member**
14. Karen Contrenchis with Leading Age Southeast
15. Justin Owens from the Louisiana State Hospice Program
16. Lisa Gardner, with CommCare
17. **Debra Merritt, Family Advocate Council Member National Advocacy Program for Fight Colorectal Cancer**
18. Alexandra Leigh, MD VA Palliative Care

Meeting Notes:

- Introductions among participants were facilitated by Dr. Susan Nelson, who emphasized the importance of collaboration within the palliative care community. Key attendees included Dr. Alexandra Leigh from the VA, nurse practitioner Cinnamon Tucker DNP, and family advocate Dr. Trey Gibson, who shared personal caregiving experiences. The group collectively acknowledged the significance of support and teamwork in enhancing palliative care services.
- The discussion focused on the current state and future direction of palliative care in Louisiana, addressing resource gaps and opportunities for improvement.
  - Dr. D. Barfield highlighted the need for additional resources not currently available within the network, prompting Trey Gibson to suggest Hogs for the Cause, an organization that provides financial assistance to families with children facing serious illnesses.
  - Dr. Susan Nelson provided an overview of the committee's status, noting vacancies due to resignations and the potential for new appointments by Governor Jeff Landry or relevant organizations. Christine Guidry, RN, and Dr. Potash has resigned as has Dr. Corey Morrison (recommending Dr. Ashley Autrey-pediatric palliative care at Manning Childrens)
  - The meeting also addressed logistical considerations, with Dr. Susan Nelson proposing a shift to lunchtime meetings, which received positive feedback from several participants, including Dr. Trey Gibson and Debra Merritt. Dr. Sonia Malhotra raised concerns about scheduling conflicts for academic members but agreed that a post-noon time could work. Ricky Mannino RPh contributed insights from his extensive experience in hospice care, while Dr. Susan Nelson discussed legislative efforts, including a pilot project aimed at improving telehealth regulations for controlled substances.
  - Additional discussion involved caring for patients and families with serious illness in the face of immigration issues. Resources to be provided to attendees by members or their institutions.
- Guest Speaker:
  - Stacie Sinclair, Associate Director, Policy and Care Transformation with CACP presented a comprehensive analysis of Louisiana's palliative care landscape, introducing the new Serious Illness scorecard that aims to provide a more accurate assessment of palliative care access. She noted Louisiana's score of 2 out of 5 stars, highlighting strengths such as the presence of palliative care programs in large hospitals, but also pointing out the low number of certified professionals per capita. Sinclair emphasized the need for improved tracking of community-based palliative care services and encouraged attendees to ensure their programs are listed on the [getpalliativecare.org](https://getpalliativecare.org) directory to enhance visibility and support for patients and families.