

Office of Public Health (OPH) Quarterly Report to the Developmental Disabilities Council
Bureau of Family Health (BFH)
October 13, 2025

Children’s Special Health Services (CSHS) works to ensure that children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) in Louisiana have access to health care services designed to minimize their disabilities and maximize their probabilities of enjoying independent and self-sufficient lives.

- Children’s Special Healthcare Services (CSHS) - Clinical Services offers direct care clinics for CYSHCNs in all regions, except 1 and 7, to meet specialty care needs in provider shortage areas. CSHS-Clinical Services (Genetics, Sickle Cell, and subspecialty clinics) offers a hybrid appointment schedule.
- CSHS - Clinical Services Social Workers continue to provide behavioral health assessments to determine if families are in need of outpatient behavioral health referrals, as well as providing care coordination, youth health transition support and resources.
- CSHS-Clinical Services also provides nutritional services in Regions 2 and 6 and hopes to expand to other Regions as the need dictates.
- Any family of a child/youth with a special health need that requires peer support, system navigation, or resource linkage is referred to Families Helping Families network in their respective region or the BFH Family Resource Center. CSHS-Clinical services also refers to other community-based organizations as appropriate.

CSHS Transportation Assistance Program provides needed transportation assistance for eligible families to attend medical appointments/procedures. Families must seek transportation assistance through their MCO before requesting assistance through CSHS. Families may contact the Family Resource Center (BFH-FamilyResourceCenter@la.gov) or their local Families Helping Families Center for more information.

Transportation Assistance Program	
July-September 2025	
Stipends issued: 101	Stipend expenditures: \$14,167.75

BFH Pediatric Medical Home Program supports pediatric clinicians in integrating best practices for compassionate, coordinated, comprehensive, and family-centered primary care. Web-based toolkits are available to guide implementation of universal [developmental screening](#), holistic [care coordination](#), and [youth health transition](#)/adolescent well care services. Designed as one-stop resources, the toolkits provide everything clinicians need to independently implement or strengthen key medical home components—all in one convenient place.

Additionally, the Medical Home Team offers customizable technical assistance (TA) and systematic guidance to help providers and health systems develop, implement, and sustain practice improvement initiatives. Technical assistance (TA), funded by Title V, is available at no-cost to provider practices or health systems. TA training and coaching focus areas include expanding care coordination practices, integrating universal developmental and/or perinatal depression screenings, enhancing adolescent well-care transition services during well visits, and quality improvement in healthcare.

Please email FamilyHealth@La.Gov for further information on any of the Pediatric Medical Home resources.

BFH-Family Resource Center (FRC) is a statewide virtual center designed to ensure CYSHCN and their families in Louisiana have access to resource and referral services. The [BFH-Family Resource Center](#) provides community referrals, transition supports, and health/education system navigation services. Additionally, the FRC provides outreach to families of children identified through the Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network to assist in linking to appropriate medical, educational, public health and peer support resources available in their region. For resource and referral services contact the FRC team via phone (504) 896-1340 or email BFH-FamilyResourceCenter@la.gov. Staff are available Monday-Friday 8 am-4pm. Non-English-speaking families can text their name, preferred language, and date/time that they are available between 8am-4:00pm to (504) 214-1785. Someone will respond in your preferred language.

Family Resource Center July - September 2025	
New Referrals	329
Total number of families engaged	273
Count of Total Resource Needs Identified	693

Families Helping Families (FHF) – BFH Project aims to build a coordinated and family-centric statewide CYSHCN resource and referral service system utilizing the collaborative partnership between FHF Networks and BFH Family Resource Center. FHF networks are Louisiana’s statewide parent-to-parent support organization serving individuals with disabilities and children/youth with special health care needs and their families.

As part of this collaboration, FHF offers annual pediatric provider trainings to strengthen the healthcare workforce capacity to care for children and youth with special health needs. Social workers and nurses can receive contact hours for attendance. The centers are busy planning spring SFY25 workshop events. Look for information on upcoming workshops posted on FHF websites, social media accounts, and email blasts.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program

- National goals aim to ensure that all babies receive:
 - Hearing screening by one month of age.
 - Diagnosis by three months of age for babies who need diagnostic evaluation after outpatient rescreening;
 - Referral and enroll in early intervention by six months of age for babies diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing.
- Supports for Families Whose Children are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - EarlySteps <https://ldh.la.gov/page/early-steps>
 - Guidance, Outreach, and Language Development (GOLD) <https://www.ssdofla.org/o/lsd/page/early-intervention-program-parent-pupil-education-program-ppep>
 - Louisiana Hands & Voices <https://www.lahandsandvoices.org/>

- Louisiana DeafBlind Project <https://www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/ladb/default.aspx>
- Advisory Council for the Early Identification of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants
 - Friday, October 24, 2025, 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
 - Benson Tower, Suite 2024
 - 1450 Poydras Street – New Orleans – 70112
 - Meeting link <https://zoom.us/j/99478691943>
- Learn More!
 - Email laehdi@la.gov
 - Louisiana Department of Health <https://ldh.la.gov/page/768>
 - Bureau of Family Health Partner for Family Health <https://partnersforfamilyhealth.org/louisiana-early-hearing-detection-and-intervention-program-la-ehdi-2/>
 - Joint Committee on Infant Hearing <https://www.jcih.org/>

Louisiana Hands & Voices

The vision of Louisiana Hands & Voices (LA H&V) is for all children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing (D/HH), or DeafBlind (DHHDB) to achieve their full potential. LA H&V is a parent-led organization striving to ensure no family feels alone, regardless of the language or communication mode they choose for their child. Through the LA H&V Guide By Your Side program, both trained Parent Guides and D/HH Guides connect with parents providing compassion and support.

LA H&V hosts monthly parent chats that provide a welcoming and supportive environment for parents to connect, learn about available resources for families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH), ask questions, and share information. The next parent chat is scheduled for November 6, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm via Zoom. These sessions offer valuable opportunities to explore resources and support networks tailored to families with D/HH children. Additionally, gift card drawings are held at each parent chat as a token of appreciation. Zoom Meeting ID: 883 3258 1799

Learn more about LA H&V

www.lahandsandvoices.org

<https://www.lahandsandvoices.org/guide-by-your-side>

Email: contactus@LAHandsandVoices.org

Genetic Diseases Program operates a comprehensive statewide newborn heel stick screening (NBS) program meeting national standards as well as ensuring access to genetic evaluation and counseling to residents of Louisiana. The Genetics Program also operates the Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) Program, which provides resources and information on how individuals diagnosed with sickle cell can receive assistance and care through the Sickle Cell Foundations and Clinics around the state.

Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network (LBDMN) tracks the occurrence of over 70 structural, functional, and genetic birth defects in Louisiana residents. LBDMN staff conduct active surveillance of birth defects in children born in Louisiana. This work helps to identify

environmental conditions, pharmaceutical side effects, or behavioral risk factors threatening Louisiana's newborns. By case definition, we include children diagnosed prior to their third birthday.

Overall prevalence of birth defects per 10,000 live births in Louisiana is 2.75%. According to the CDC, the US average is about 3% of all babies born each year. Among Louisiana children with birth defects, cardiovascular system defects (about 65%) were the most common. Complete findings are in the [Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network 2024 Annual Report](#) to the legislature.

Since 2022, LBDMN identified 4,985 children born in 2020 – 2025 who may benefit from a referral needs assessment, including:

- 4,635 with qualifying birth defects,
- 144 children born in 2024-25 excluded from LBDMN case definition, but who may benefit from referral needs assessment, and
- 204 children born prematurely in 2024 (pilot study)

Currently, we are identifying children under 2 years old for needs assessment/resource services.

Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD) functions as the principal state program that provides information and services to and for individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or hard of hearing on behalf of the State of Louisiana.

LCD Programs include:

- Hearing aids for qualifying individuals based on age and income
- Assistive technology for qualifying individuals, free of charge
- Support Service Providers for individuals who are deaf and blind (DeafBlind) to live and participate in their communities with independence.
- Interpreter standards, services, oversight and support for communication accessibility for individuals who use American Sign Language (ASL) and the ASL interpreter workforce

LCD has developed a Statewide Mentorship Program to elevate the quality and number of qualified American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL) in Louisiana through several key objectives:

- Providing resources and support for the ongoing professional development of ASL interpreters in Louisiana.
- Supporting the development of essential skills necessary for ASL interpreters to become highly qualified and certified professionals.
- Ensuring all Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing ASL users have access to high-quality ASL interpreting services to promote equitable communication access.

Training Opportunities: If your organization is interested in trainings, professional development, or resources related to Deaf sensitivity, culture, or services including ASL Interpreting for d/Deaf, DeafBlind or hard of hearing people, please contact LCD. More information on the LCD please click [here](#) or contact us at LCD@la.gov.

BFH Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) is a no-cost, voluntary program that provides family support and coaching to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women and parenting families with young children. Families are paired with registered nurses or certified parent educators who provide personalized education, guidance, and referrals to services to empower families to reach their goals. Nurses and Parent Educators work with families in their homes or the family's preferred location. MIECHV implements two evidenced-based, home visiting models- Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and Parents as Teachers (PAT).

Services provided to participating families include:

- Health education and coaching
- Support in building positive parenting skills and caregiving confidence
- Help setting and reaching personal goals, such as returning to school or work
- Connection and referrals to services and community resources

Benefits of program participation include:

- Improved economic self-sufficiency
- Early identification of developmental delays
- Improved child health and development

MIECHV recently concluded our annual Client Satisfaction Survey. This annual process provides families enrolled in MIECHV services with an opportunity to share their perspectives on the quality, accessibility, and impact of the support they receive. The survey is a key part of our ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement and helps ensure that program decisions reflect the real experiences of the families we serve.

This year, families completed the survey at an unprecedented 58% response rate—our highest level of participation to date. Of those respondents, 99.2% reported being satisfied or highly satisfied with services.

We are currently reviewing additional comments and suggestions and will use this feedback to strengthen how we support families. Family and parent voice is essential to MIECHV—what we hear directly informs our CQI priorities, staff coaching and supervision, professional development opportunities, and the development of family-centered resources. Internally, we will work to translate these insights into FY26 CQI actions and targeted training and resource updates.

Louisiana Provider to Provider Consultation Line (PPCL) is a no-cost provider-to-provider telephone consultation and education program to help pediatric and perinatal health care providers address their patients' behavioral and mental health needs. The program aims to increase the capacity to screen, diagnose, treat, and refer patients to supportive services by integrating behavioral health into the pediatric primary care setting and connecting providers to mental health consultants and psychiatrists.

How PPCL Works:

Any pediatric and/or perinatal provider who has behavioral health related question can call PPCL at (833) 721-2881 or request a consult by going to <https://ldh.la.gov/page/ppcl>. PPCL's mental

health team, which includes licensed mental health professionals and psychiatrists, can provide education and support on questions regarding mental health diagnoses, medications, and psychotherapy interventions for a wide range of behavioral health needs (e.g. mental health care guides, screening forms). PPCL also provides information about mental health and other community resources that may be beneficial to the patients you serve. PPCL offers training and information on pediatric and perinatal behavioral health topics and issues through its TeleECHO series, webinars, in-person training events, and website.

While not required to use PPCL services, providers are strongly encouraged to register for PPCL. For more info on the Provider-to-Provider Consultation Line, go to <https://ldh.la.gov/page/ppcl>.

PartnersForFamilyHealth.org Data Center disseminates products for public health practitioners, community organizations, policy makers, and researchers to guide programs and inform policy decisions. BFH has a dedicated Data to Action Team that collects, analyzes, interprets, and prepares data dissemination products. Here you can find reports and fact sheets on birth outcomes, mortality and injury indicators analyzed at a state, regional and parish level as well as links to websites with additional, relevant data.

The Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant is the cornerstone of policy and programming for all mothers and children. Significant funding is directed toward the state's systems of care for children and youth with developmental disabilities and other special healthcare needs (CYSHCN), to evolve and meet their unique and complex needs. The MCH Block Grant supports vital programs and services to enhance the health outcomes and quality of life for CYSHCN. Some of these efforts include:

- Strengthening public health infrastructure for newborn genetic, hearing, and developmental disability screening
- Improving access to care within a pediatric medical home for children with developmental disabilities and other special healthcare needs
- Integration of special health services for children with developmental disabilities and other special healthcare needs in statewide Parish Health Units
- Developing model assessment, referral, and care coordination services for children with developmental disabilities and other special healthcare needs
- Establishing credentialing standards and building system capacity for American Sign Language interpreters in education, health, and legal settings
- Providing empowering supports to families and family-led community based organizations, including regional Families Helping Families organizations and regional Sickle Cell Foundations.

Louisiana's most recent grant application and the 2026 – 2030 State Action Plan are available on Bureau of Family Health's [website](#). For feedback or questions regarding Louisiana's MCH Block Grant, please reach out to us at TitleVMCH@la.gov.

Project SOAR (Screen Often and Accurately Refer), Project SOAR (Screen Often and Accurately Refer) is in year 5 of a five-year, federally funded initiative aimed at enhancing Louisiana's developmental health system for young children, focusing on universal screenings and timely follow-up care for developmental needs, including perinatal depression, in children

from prenatal to age 3 (P-3). This project partners with primary caregivers (e.g., parents, guardians, adult siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.), healthcare providers (e.g., Pediatricians, family doctors, Obstetricians, nurses, etc.), and community organizations to discuss experiences with child developmental screening, caregiver depression screening, and follow-up during check-up visits.

Regular convening of partners, collaborators, and families are held to strengthen collaboration and alignment. These gatherings foster meaningful connections, facilitate the exchange of information, and provide dedicated workspace for SOAR to advance system-strengthening strategies.

- Ongoing Family Leader Engagement
 - 3 Family Leaders, 2 Family Advisors regularly engaged with implementation activities
 - Ongoing support and mentorship
 - Weekly meetings for continuous feedback
 - Shared learning and capacity building opportunities
 - Elevated family voice in all aspects of decision-making
 - In-person presence at community events, resource distribution
- Key Partner Alignment Activities to Support Project Implementation
 - Families Helping Families (FHF)
 - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
 - Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE)
 - Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
- Team Capacity Building
 - July 10, 2025: Attended Part 2 of the Annual Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Meeting
 - Strategies for successful project implementation and enhanced family engagement throughout the remainder of the project
 - September 18, 2025: LA Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Reflective Session
 - Weekly Learning Opportunities to support Family Leaders and Advisors

Young Child Wellness Collaborative (YCWC) is a cross-agency advisory council that provides leadership and informs priorities across the continuum of supports/services within Louisiana's Early Childhood System. The YCWC serves as the State-Level advisory team for the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, Project SOAR (Screen Often and Accurately Refer). The YCWC meets on the second Tuesday of even numbered months; the next convening is October 14, 2025.

In addition to families and health care providers, the YCWC includes representatives across the sector of the state's child health system. Representatives include BFH program leadership, the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), Medicaid, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the LSU Human Development Center, Head Start, EarlySteps, the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, and the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.