

Office of Public Health (OPH) Quarterly Report to the Developmental Disabilities Council
Bureau of Family Health (BFH)
April 14, 2026

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 January-March 2026	
Stipends issued: 85	Stipend expenditures: \$8,703.57

BFH Pediatric Medical Home Program supports pediatric clinicians in integrating best practices for 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 a one-stop for 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 developmental, 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 their preferred language.

Family Resource Center October-December 2025	
New Referrals	522
Total number of families engaged	365
Count of Total Resource Needs Identified	1151

Families Helping Families (FHF) – BFH Project aims to build a coordinated and family-centric statewide CYSCHN 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. Watch for FHF promotions.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program National initiative that supports the early identification of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing through:

- Hearing screening by one month of age;
- Audiological evaluation by three months of age for babies who need diagnostic evaluation after outpatient rescreening;
- Referral and enrollment in early intervention by six months of age for babies diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing;
- Referral and enrollment in family-to-family support services by six months of age;
- Referral to deaf adult-to-family support services by nine months of age.
- LA EHDI also:
 - Collaborates with hospitals to ensure accurate and timely reporting;
 - Contacts families of babies who need outpatient follow-up testing;
 - Notifies physicians with patients who need outpatient follow-up testing;
 - Obtains follow-up results from audiologists;

- Refers babies who are deaf or hard of hearing to early intervention and family-to-family support;
- Maintains a database to document screening, follow-up, early intervention, family-to-family support, and outcome data for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Advisory Council for the Early Identification of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants
 - Friday, April 24, 2026, 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
 - Benson Tower, Suite 2024
 - 1450 Poydras Street – New Orleans – 70112
 - Register here: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_513MA12RFSzJgOGAz3sgg
- Questions?
 - Email laehdi@la.gov or call (504) 568-2876

Louisiana Hands & Voices is a statewide parent-driven organization that supports families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. They advocate for families, share information, and create space and time for people to come together and help one another. Hands & Voices knows families use many different ways to communicate with their children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Parent Guides:

- Are available to support families by listening and sharing stories about their own experiences raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- Share compassion and practical knowledge as parents who have a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- Are trained to support families without bias towards any particular communication approach (e.g. spoken, sign, cued speech, combined ways, etc.)

Deaf Guides:

- Are specifically trained to provide support to families with invaluable perspectives that come from personal, lived experience.
- Are uniquely qualified and provide parents with a positive, hopeful perspective from their day-to-day, real-life experiences.
- Give parents the opportunity to ask questions.

For more information:

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 2.81%. 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 66%) were the most common. Complete findings are in [the Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network 2025 Annual Report](#) to the legislature.

From 2022-February 2026, LBDMN identified 5,391 children born in 2020 – 2025 who may benefit from a referral needs assessment, including:

- 5,020 with qualifying birth defects,
- 164 children born in 2024-25 excluded from LBDMN case definition, but who may benefit from referral needs assessment, and
- 300 children born prematurely

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

Following the release of the FFY2025 Annual Performance Measures Report, new Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) projects have been identified to strengthen outcomes for families served through MIECHV. Grounded in data that highlights both successes and opportunities, the upcoming CQI cycle will focus on increasing well-child visit completion for prenatally enrolled children, improving follow-through on depression screenings and referrals, expanding timely developmental screening using ASQ-3, strengthening intimate partner violence referral practices, and enhancing overall referral-to-enrollment rates. These targeted efforts reflect a commitment to using data not only to monitor performance, but also to drive meaningful improvements that better support families.

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 supports key policy and program advancements for all mothers and children in Louisiana. 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) is a five-year initiative that has been led by the Louisiana Department of Health, Bureau of Family Health. The project, which started in 2021, aims to strengthen the state's capacity for timely and accessible developmental and perinatal depression screening, from the prenatal period through early childhood.

Since its inception, SOAR has engaged families - including 718 parents and caregivers through a mixed-method data-informed approach - alongside health care providers and community organizations, to better understand experiences with screening and follow-up after well-child

visits. Building on these insights, the project established a cohort of motivated family leaders, including five who have remained continuously engaged, serving as compensated partners and trusted voices throughout project implementation.

Project Highlights:

- Ongoing Family Leader Engagement
 - 3 Family Leaders and 2 Family Advisors regularly engaged with implementation
 - Through weekly learning opportunities, advisory participation, and storytelling, these family leaders have ensured that screening and referral strategies reflect lived experience, improve quality and follow-up, and advance sustainable, family-centered systems of care, as the grant period concludes in July 2026.
- Shared Learning and Capacity-Building Opportunities
 - Increased community engagement and resource distribution (Learn the Signs. Act Early.) directly to families
- Key Partner Alignment to Support Implementation:
 - Families Helping Families (FHF)
 - Delivered Quarter 3 SOAR-informed Family Training, “Things I Wish I Knew” to over 75 community attendees
 - Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
 - Young Child Wellness Collaborative (YCWC)

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 Project SOAR. The YCWC meets on the second Tuesday of even numbered months; the next convening is April 14th, 2026. As the SOAR Grant concludes July 31, 2026, the Bureau plans to engage YCWC members to serve as advisors for Title V Pediatric Medical Home initiatives, as well as for state partner early childhood initiatives.

In addition to families and health care providers, the YCWC includes representatives from 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.