Office of Public Health (OPH) Quarterly Report to the Developmental Disabilities Council
Bureau of Family Health (BFH)
October 12, 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.

BFH Pediatric Medical Home Program provides no-cost training, coaching, technical assistance, and workflow optimization to help pediatric primary care practices and health systems strengthen and sustain medical home practices. Support focuses on universal developmental screening, holistic care coordination, adolescent well-care/youth health transition, and quality improvement in healthcare settings.

Web-based toolkits provide a one-stop resource for implementation guidance, practical tools, and on-demand training, supporting practices in launching and sustaining medical home quality improvement initiatives. The Medical Home Team also provides customizable, practice-level technical assistance to help providers and health systems assess needs, develop and implement improvement strategies, and integrate evidence-informed practices into routine workflows.

Title V–funded technical assistance is available at no cost to provider practices and health systems. Areas of support include expanding care coordination, integrating universal developmental and/or perinatal depression screening, incorporating health transition support into adolescent well-care visits, and building quality improvement capacity. For more information about Pediatric Primary Care resources or technical assistance, email FamilyHealth@La.Gov.

BFH-Family Resource Center (FRC) is a statewide virtual center designed to ensure CYSHCN and their families in Louisiana have access to needed services. The BFH-Family Resource Center conducts 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. Additionally, the center provides provider and clinic resource services, and resource and community referrals, transition support, and health/education system navigation services for referred families. 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 July-September 2026	
New Referrals	634
Total number of families engaged	374
Count of Total Resource Needs Identified	1447

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 CYSHCN, individuals with disabilities and 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 and disabilities. Social workers and nurses can receive contact hours for attendance. Watch for FHF training promotions.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program National initiative that supports the early identification of infants who are d/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 d/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 d/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 d/Deaf or hard of hearing.

The Advisory Council for the Early Identification of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants
Friday, October 23, 2026, 12:00 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 ways to communicate with their children who are d/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 d/Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Share compassion and practical knowledge as parents who have a child who is d/ 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: 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-September 2026, LBDMN identified 6,088 children born in 2020 – 2026, who may benefit from a referral needs assessment, including:

•5,694 with qualifying birth defects,

•208 children born in 2024-26 excluded from LBDMN case definition, but who may benefit from referral needs assessment, and,

•786 children born prematurely in 2024-2026

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 training, 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 wellbeing 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

One of the many important components of home visiting is the early identification of developmental concerns. Home visitors provide ongoing developmental screening and education and help families navigate referrals to early intervention, healthcare providers, and other community-based supports when concerns are identified.

In FFY2025, 80.2% of children enrolled in Louisiana MIECHV received timely developmental screening using a validated tool, compared with 80.1% nationally. Among children with identified developmental delays who were referred for services, 98.6% received timely support or services following a positive screening, compared with 76.8% nationally.
Beyond screening and referral, home visitors work alongside parents to help them understand and respond to their child's developmental needs, reinforce developmentally supportive activities within everyday family routines, and help families navigate and stay connected to recommended services and supports. This ongoing relationship provides parents with support as they advocate for their child and build confidence in supporting their child's continued development.
For questions, additional information, or to make a referral to Louisiana MIECHV, please contact MIECHVReferrals@la.gov.

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. The state's application for Federal Fiscal Year 2027 was submitted mid-July. Activities for FFY2027 began on October 1, 2026. For feedback or questions regarding Louisiana's MCH Block Grant, please reach out to us at TitleVMCH@la.gov.

Young Child Wellness Collaborative (YCWC) is a cross-agency advisory council that provides leadership and informs priorities across Louisiana's pediatric system of care. The YCWC serves as the state-level advisory body guiding Louisiana Title V Medical Home initiatives. Its membership includes families, healthcare providers, and representatives from across the child health and family support systems, including the Bureau of Family Health (BFH), Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), Louisiana Medicaid, Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), LSU Human Development Center, Head Start, EarlySteps, Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, and the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The YCWC meets on the second Tuesday of even-numbered months. The next meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2026.

Interested in participating? If you or your organization would like to contribute to the YCWC's work to strengthen Louisiana's pediatric system of care, email FamilyHealth@la.gov.