



**Contact:**  
**Della Hasselle**  
della.hasselle@ochsner.org

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## **Louisiana’s Healthy State Announces 38-Member Advisory Board, Medical Director on 2-Year Anniversary**

**NEW ORLEANS, La.** – Two years ago, Ochsner Health joined the state of Louisiana and Gov. John Bel Edwards to announce Healthy State by 2030, an ambitious plan to improve Louisiana’s health ranking from 50<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> by 2030. This initiative is Ochsner’s commitment to improve the overall health of the state and is a comprehensive strategy to enhance healthcare access, improve health equity and achieve better health outcomes.

Building on the initial Healthy State commitment, despite obstacles of the pandemic, major hurricanes, and workforce challenges, Ochsner is thrilled to celebrate the recent formation of a 38-member Healthy State Advisory Board, representing 35 organizations spanning multiple sectors, businesses, and industries. As a catalyst and convenor, Ochsner recognizes that the Healthy State movement is too large and too significant to be impacted by just one organization. Only through the shared purpose and strategy of the Advisory Board and its partners can the true value of collective impact be realized.

By joining forces with these 35 statewide organizations, Healthy State collectively represents 100,000 employees, educates over 200,000 students and cares for 4.6 million community members’ lives – all working together through a common vision and commitment to a better Louisiana.

“Healthy State will take a tremendous, collaborative effort to reach our goals of making Louisiana a healthier and more productive state for all,” said Leonardo Seoane, MD, FACP, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer for Ochsner Health, and the system’s executive leader for Healthy State. “Louisiana’s culture, resilience, and people make it wonderful and unique, and collectively, we agree that our communities deserve our investment. Through the lens of health equity, our new advisory board will collaborate and use our unique capabilities to support our Healthy State priorities.”

### **The Healthy State Advisory Board members are:**

- **Missy Andrade**, Community Foundation of Acadiana
- **Matt Berger, JD, MBA**, Gulf States at Humana

- **Ava Cates**, Louisiana Workforce Commission
- **Gerrelda Davis**, Louisiana Primary Care Association
- **Shelina Davis, MPH**, Louisiana Public Health Institute
- **Toni Flowers, PhD**, LCMC Health
- **Britney Green**, Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office
- **Kristi Gustavson**, Community Health Foundation of North Louisiana
- **James Henderson, PhD**, University of Louisiana System
- **Veneeth Iyengar**, ConnectLA-Louisiana Broadband Development & Connectivity
- **John Kirwan, PhD**, Pennington Biomedical Research Center
- **Andy Kopplin**, Greater New Orleans Foundation
- **Thomas LaVeist, PhD**, Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine
- **David Lewis, MD**, Louisiana State University Health Shreveport
- **Karl Lirette**, United Healthcare Community Plan of Louisiana
- **Fred Luter**, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church
- **Suzanne Mestayer**, ThirtyNorth Investments
- **Judy Morse, MPA**, Urban League of Louisiana
- **Steve Nelson, MD**, LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans
- **Pete November**, Ochsner Health
- **Richard Vath, MD**, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System
- **Wendi Palermo, PhD RN**, Louisiana Community & Technical College System
- **Mayra Pineda**, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- **Kim Hunter Reed, PhD**, Louisiana Board of Regents
- **Joyce Rogers, JD**, US Policy and Public Affairs at Pfizer
- **Michael Rolfsen, MD**, Baton Rouge Clinic
- **Paul Salles**, Louisiana Hospital Association
- **Tracey Schiro**, Ochsner Health
- **James Schlottman**, Louisiana Healthcare Connections
- **Leonardo Seoane, MD**, Ochsner Health
- **Dennis Shields**, Southern University & A&M College
- **Nathalie Simon, JD**, Laitram
- **Steve Skrivanos**, Skrivanos Engineering
- **Victoria Smith, MD**, Ochsner Health Board of Directors
- **John Spain**, Baton Rouge Area Foundation
- **Steven Udvarhelyi, MD**, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana
- **Reynold Verret, PhD**, Xavier University of Louisiana
- **Stephen Waguessack, JD**, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry

Healthy State was formed in 2020 because Louisiana ranks near the bottom in too many health measures [published annually by America's Health Rankings](#). Moving the Healthy State vision forward, Ochsner and partners have dug deep into the data to understand in detail the top 20 drivers of poor health in Louisiana. The Healthy State team has formed a statewide plan to tackle these obstacles through comprehensive public health initiatives, education and community outreach, and advocacy for public policy that better protects residents. Focus areas will evolve with new Healthy State investments based on annual health rankings and the state's community health needs assessment.

**Initial priorities and annual goals by 2030 are:**

- **Workforce development and education:** Advance careers by growing workforce development and improving high school graduation rates. *Goal: Increase average per-capita income by \$4,838.*
- **Cancer and chronic conditions:** Save lives by accelerating access to lung, colorectal and breast cancer screenings. Expand detection and treatment of chronic conditions by coordinating payors, providers, and foundations. *Goal: 125,000 years of life saved.*
- **Smoking cessation:** End smoking by changing behavior, advancing policy, and expanding access to comprehensive smoking cessation services. *Goal: 214,000 fewer smokers.*
- **Broadband:** Connect homes by eliminating the digital divide. *Goal: 86,000 more homes with high-speed internet.*

In the last two years, with Ochsner serving as a catalyst for this work, Healthy State has already made a difference for thousands of residents across Louisiana. With local and national partners and leaders, partners collectively invested over \$140 million aimed at changing how we view health and to improve state and regional rankings.

#### Advisory Board Spotlights for 2022:

- **Partners worked with policymakers and LCTCS to dedicate \$25 million in state funding to train more healthcare providers**, with an initial focus in North Louisiana and the Bayou region. Healthy State will [continue to support 3,000 residents by 2025](#) through Ochsner Scholars, a tuition assistance program to keep healthcare workers in Louisiana.
- **The Urban League of Louisiana joined Ochsner to focus on community health outreach and health equity.** [The first Big Health Event](#) provided thousands of critical health screenings for residents, with plans to expand to Baton Rouge in 2023.
- **Xavier University is to be the first in Louisiana, and the only Historically Black College University in the nation, to offer a [genetic counseling training program](#).** Ochsner is partnering with Xavier to provide the clinical training.
- **Chevron and Ochsner Health expanded their Lung Cancer Awareness, Education and Prevention Program [thanks to a \\$50,000 donation from Chevron](#).** The program will continue to reach community members in St. Tammany Parish and impact more lives in East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Ascension, St. Charles, Terrebonne, and Lafourche parishes.
- **The [Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco Free Living](#) and their coalition partners are celebrating new comprehensive smoke-free places** including the towns of Farmerville, New Iberia, Angie, & Campti.
- **Laitram & Ochsner Health are expanding innovative programming to support literacy.** The partnership supports [Ready Set Read!, an Innovations for Learning](#) program.
- **Healthy State supports [ConnectLA](#), which is bringing together critical stakeholders to discuss broadband efforts.** Parishes are receiving “Gumbo Grants” and funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The collective Healthy State team is also excited to introduce the initiative’s first medical director, [Eboni Price-Haywood, MD, MPH, FACP](#), who has served as Medical Director of [Ochsner Xavier Institute for Health Equity and Research \(OXIHER\)](#) since 2020. In her critical roles, Dr. Price-Haywood is leading efforts to better understand and address disparities and social determinants of health in Louisiana.

“Healthcare equity, including access to preventative care, is critically important and cannot be achieved overnight, nor by working alone,” said Dr. Eboni Price-Haywood. “Together, we must meet people where they are, as a Healthy State starts with healthier communities. We are ready to form deep and meaningful partnerships with these community, business, and education leaders to prioritize this work.”

Dr. Price-Haywood has spent her career focusing on disease prevention, health promotion and care delivery improvements, with a focus on addressing health disparities. She is a physician for Ochsner’s Primary Care and Wellness Center, Director of the Primary Care Research Network, and Professor at Ochsner Clinical School, University of Queensland. She has also held key leadership roles within the Society of General Internal Medicine, as co-chair of the Health Equity Commission, and as an editorial board member of the Journal of General Internal Medicine.

To learn more about the statewide strategy, Healthy State Advisory Board members, Healthy State leadership, and Louisiana ranking research and data visit [www.livehealthystate.org](http://www.livehealthystate.org).

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### **About Healthy State**

*Louisiana has long been deemed one of the least healthy states in the nation, placing 50th in 2020 by America’s Health Rankings. For the good of everyone living in our communities, that must change. With Ochsner Health as a catalyst, a new initiative called Healthy State seeks to move Louisiana into the top 40th healthiest states by 2030 through a comprehensive strategy to enhance healthcare access and improve health equity and health outcomes. To learn more, visit [www.livehealthystate.org](http://www.livehealthystate.org).*

### **About Ochsner Health**

*Ochsner Health is an integrated healthcare system with a mission to Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate. Celebrating 80 years in 2022, it leads nationally in cancer care, cardiology, neurosciences, liver and heart transplants and pediatrics, among other areas. Ochsner is consistently named both the top hospital and top children’s hospital in Louisiana by U.S. News & World Report. The not-for-profit organization is inspiring healthier lives and stronger communities. Its focus is on preventing diseases and providing patient-centered care that is accessible, affordable, convenient and effective. Ochsner Health pioneers new treatments, deploys emerging technologies and performs groundbreaking research, including over 700 clinical studies. It has more than 36,000 employees and over 4,600 employed and affiliated physicians in over 90 medical specialties and subspecialties. It operates 47 hospitals and more than 370 health and urgent care centers across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Gulf South; and its cutting-edge Connected Health digital medicine program is caring for patients beyond its walls. In 2021, Ochsner Health treated more than 1 million people from every state and 75 countries. As Louisiana’s top healthcare educator, Ochsner Health and its partners educate thousands of healthcare professionals annually. To learn more, visit [www.ochsner.org](http://www.ochsner.org).*