



John Bel Edwards
Governor

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DRUG POLICY

Dr. Chaunda Mitchell
Director, Drug Policy &
Executive Director,
Diversity and Inclusion

Kristy Miller
Assistant Director

DRUG POLICY BOARD
January 14, 2021; 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Dr. Chaunda Mitchell, Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and Chair of the Drug Policy Board, called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Welcome and Introductions

Chaunda welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Drug Policy Board in over a year. For the sake of time, Chaunda asked that voting members introduce themselves first and then members of the public would be allowed to either introduce themselves or type their names in the chat window to denote their attendance. After introductions, she announced that there were 15 members present so quorum was achieved. A list of all members and stakeholders who attended the virtual meeting is included at the end of this document.

Old Business

Review and approve minutes from previous meeting

Chaunda asked everyone to refer to the minutes that were emailed prior to the meeting. Kristy Miller, Assistant Director of the Office of Drug Policy, put the minutes up on the screen. Chaunda acknowledged the comprehensiveness of the minutes and then asked if there were any edits or amendments to be made. Hearing none, Michael Comeaux, Healthy Communities Lead at the Louisiana Department of Education, made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Gerald Boudreaux seconded the motion. Vote by voice was made. All who were present agreed with the motion. None disagreed. None abstained.

New Business

A. Update on Drug Policy Board membership

Chaunda made a number of announcements about membership changes. First, she welcomed State Representative Bob Owen of District 76 as the Speaker of the House's designee to represent the House Health and Welfare Committee. Also, she welcomed Don Petty, Director of Intelligence for the Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (GC HIDTA) as our newest Of-Counsel member. Next, Chaunda announced that Judge Jules Edwards who served as the district court judge representative appointed by Governor Edwards has retired from the judiciary so he can no longer serve on the Drug Policy Board. However, he is not fully retiring and has already been contracted by a partner agency to conduct some work

for them. Further, she referred everyone to an email sent by Alberto DePuy, Assistant Attorney General, who announced he was leaving his agency to become an Administrative Law Judge in the Division of Administrative Law. Next, Chaunda reminded everyone that Juana Lombard, former Commissioner for the Alcohol and Tobacco Control Office previously vacated her position when she was elected District Court Judge in New Orleans. Since our last meeting, Ernest Legier was appointed first as Interim Commissioner and then permanently as Commissioner of ATC. Finally, Chaunda announced that our physician representative appointed by Governor Edwards, Dr. Joe Kanter, was recently appointed to State Health Officer at the Louisiana Department of Health.

B. Presentation: Louisiana Drug Threat Assessment

Chaunda introduced Don Petty, Director of Intelligence with the Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). Don began his presentation by describing the HIDTA program and the fact that it falls under the federal Office of Drug Control Policy. He shared that the legislation that created the HIDTA program requires that the regional offices develop an annual drug threat assessment for its region and the states within. He emphasized that the assessment reports are written in an unclassified manner so it can be disseminated widely and used to make important decisions about funding, law enforcement deployment, and utilization of other resources.

Don started his presentation with an overview of the regional assessment which includes Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Tennessee. For example, for 2021, the top regional drug threats in order are methamphetamines, fentanyl and other opioids, heroin, controlled prescription drugs, marijuana, cocaine, and new psychoactive substances. Don proceeded to describe HIDTA's data analysis and prioritization process that informs the regional and state reports. They look at a number of resources including investigative data, crime lab data, SUD abuse data, property crime and violent crime reports to local law enforcement, as well as surveys to both law enforcement and treatment and prevention agencies.

Next Don transitioned to discussing specifically Louisiana's assessment report. First, he provided the drug threats in order of concern for Louisiana. They are methamphetamines, heroin, fentanyl and other opioids, marijuana, cocaine, controlled prescription drugs, and new psychoactive substances. Don proceeded to provide more detail about each of the 7 threat categories in turn. Highlights are available in PowerPoint slides and in full context in the report. Contact Kristy if you would like to obtain a copy. The report ends with an informed description of expected trends and an outlook on changes in drug behavior.

Don concluded by explaining that the GC HIDTA understands that the ranking of drugs isn't the same for each region of the state, but that the report is a result of aggregated data. To that end, for the metro areas where they have enough data provided by the law enforcement and prevention and treatment professionals, GC HIDTA has begun developing shorter assessment reports called abstracts for those areas. At this time, in Louisiana, they have been able to develop abstracts for Baton Rouge and New Orleans. GC HIDTA is hoping to eventually be able to develop abstracts for all the major metro areas in the states in their region. The more data they have, the greater opportunity they have to develop a good product.

C. Drug policy trends across the U.S.

Due to the serious and hectic events of 2020, Chaunda and Kristy realized that important policy changes at the federal and state levels in the drug control arena may have been missed by members. Thus, Kristy provided a snapshot of federal and state policy efforts, both those that succeeded and those that did not succeed in 2020 and early 2021. Policy efforts primarily focused on efforts to legalize and commercialize marijuana. A copy of the slides used for this update are available.

D. Discussion: Drug policy bills for 2021

Malcolm Broussard, Executives Director for the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy, shared that they have already drafted the annual update to the state's list of controlled substance. They bring down the federal changes to align the state law with federal law. The LSP Crime Lab is reviewing their language for appropriate nomenclature.

Dustin Danos with the Attorney General's Office is working on a bill to expand the drug and specialty courts in the state. This bill is a result of the Drug and Specialty Court Commission that was created through a Senate Resolution in the last legislative session. The idea is that funding for the expansion would come from future opioid settlement funds.

Other Business

A. Office of Drug Policy updates

No additional update

B. Member agency updates

Dr. Janice Williams, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the LA Department of Health, provided an update on both the agencies COVID response and on the numerous grant programs awarded to the Office of Behavioral Health. A document with summaries of each program was provided to Chaunda and Kristy and will be disseminated to members post-meeting.

Rebecca Nugent, Chemistry Manager for the LSP Crime Lab, will have some data for us to review during next meeting.

Public Comments

No members of the public offered any comments.

Upcoming Meetings

A list of upcoming meetings for all the board and commissions associated with the Office of Drug Policy was provided.

Adjournment

Chaunda announced that there was no additional business to address. With that, Judge Jules Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rebecca Nugent seconded the motion. By a live voice vote, all members approved the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 am.

MEETING ATTENDEES

VOTING MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance
Alcohol industry representative	Kody Thompson	Yes
Attorney General's Office	Dustin Dano (for Pat Magee)	Yes
Board of Pharmacy	Malcolm Broussard	Yes
District Court Judge	Vacant	-----
Federal agency with AOD ed/ treatment/prev responsibilities	Vacant	-----
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Dr. Chaunda Mitchell	Yes
House member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Representative Bob Owen	Yes
Louisiana Commission on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse	Vacant/Commission no longer exists	-----
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement	Linda Gautier	Yes
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services	Vacant	----
Louisiana Department of Education	Michael Comeaux	Yes
Louisiana Department of Health	Dr. Janice Williams	Yes
Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections	Blake LeBlanc	Yes
Louisiana District Attorneys Association	Warren Montgomery	Yes
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman	Yes
Louisiana Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control	Ernest Legier	No
Louisiana Public Defenders Board	Remy Starns	Yes
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Shannon Dirmann	No
Louisiana State Police	Rebecca Nugent	Yes
National Guard	MSgt Amy Thomas (for Major Snowden)	Yes
Physician	Dr. Joseph Kanter	No
Private organization involved in substance abuse prevention	Vacant	-----
Senate member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Senator Gerald Boudreaux	Yes

OF-COUNSEL MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance
LA State Board of Medical Examiners	Dr. Vincent Culotta	No
LA Department of Veteran's Affairs	Barry Robinson	Yes
Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education	Dr. Jim Hussey	Yes
Drug Enforcement Administration, NOLA Office	Lawrence Alexander	Yes
Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area	Don Petty	Yes

STAFF

Kristy Miller, Governor's Office of Drug Policy

GUESTS

Leslie Chambers, Governor's Office

Leslie Freeman, Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health

Cathy Childers, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and Co-Chair of Prevention Systems Cmte

Amiee Moles, SREC

Austin Matthews, SREC

John Aggrey, SREC

Ashley Tillison, Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health