



John Bel Edwards  
Governor

# State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
DRUG POLICY

Kristy Miller  
Director

## GOVERNOR'S DWI TASK FORCE May 17, 2023; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### MINUTES

#### Call to Order

Lisa Freeman, Chair of the DWI Task Force and Executive Director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC), called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. Lisa Freeman and Kristy Miller, Director of Drug Policy announced that there were 11 members or proxies in attendance which achieved a quorum.

#### Welcome and Introductions

Kristy did a roll call for Voting Beginning with the voting members seated at the table, each member was asked to introduce him/herself. After these introductions, stakeholders were invited to introduce themselves as well. Kristy Miller reminded all attendees to grab a meeting packet.

#### **Old Business-** Discuss and Approve: Minutes from February 2023 meeting

Kristy Miller made a motion to approve minutes from February 2023. Dr. Beau Clark seconded the motion. Vote by voice was made. All who were present agreed with the motion. None disagreed. None abstained.

#### **New Business**

##### A. *Case Studies in Screening and Assessing DWI Offenders for Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)*

- a. *The CARS Pilot Program in the 15<sup>th</sup> JDC presented by Judge Jules Edwards, Judicial Outreach Liaison, ABA Judicial Division, and Dr. Scott Smith, Louisiana State University*

**Judge Jules Edwards** shared that The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission received a grant to develop and implement the 2022 Louisiana CARS Pilot Program, providing certain Louisiana Judges with free access to trained screeners for administering a computerized mental health screening tool. The purpose was to assess the risk of mental health and substance use disorders, the likelihood of repeat DWI offenses, and to offer a list of local clinicians for necessary assessment and treatment. Over a 6-month period, data was collected and an evaluation of the project was conducted.

He further stated that the program utilized the Computerized Assessment & Referral System (CARS), adapted from the World Health Organization's Composite International Diagnostic Instrument (CIDI) for DSM-IV. This well-validated tool produces diagnostic reports based on completed assessments and is designed to identify psychiatric disorders. The program aimed to address recidivism and impaired driving issues, providing judges with evidence-based strategies to encourage rehabilitation and better choices for offenders.

He emphasized the need for early screening and assessment in the criminal justice process was emphasized, as high-risk individuals could be directed towards appropriate clinical assessment and treatment. The presentation discussed the importance of holding offenders accountable while reducing the likelihood of reoccurrence. Various screening instruments were mentioned, including Impaired Driving Assessment (IDA), DUI Risk and Needs Triage (DUI-RANT™), and the CARS screener.

He also highlighted that the screening process could take as little as 20 minutes, but complex cases might require more time. The CARS screener, based on the WHO WMH-CIDI, could take up to 50 minutes. Axis I disorders, such as anxiety disorders and substance use disorders, were frequently found among the public. The WHO WMH-CIDI was described as a comprehensive tool for assessing mental disorders, their prevalence, severity, burden, and treatment use.

Judge Jules Edwards shared that CARS program aimed to identify mental health issues impacting DUI cases, enabling interventions to improve rehabilitation prospects. The screener provided the judge and the subject with written reports detailing biopsychosocial factors related to mental health and substance use, the risk of future DWIs, and local treatment providers. Judges utilized this information to set probation conditions.

He concluded his portion of the presentation by informing the attendants that the Louisiana CARS Pilot Program aimed to reduce recidivism and improve road safety by providing judges with tools and information to address mental health and substance use disorders in DUI cases. The program utilized the CARS screener based on the WHO WMH-CIDI and emphasized the importance of early screening, assessment, and appropriate treatment.

**Dr. Scott Smith** presented information on the program evaluation, focusing on the top 10 parishes with intoxicated vehicle operators. He highlighted demographics like gender, region, month of arrest, and DSM V diagnoses, both positive and negative screening results. He noted this was an implementation study and not an outcome study. **Judge Jules Edwards** suggested that to enhance data robustness, he suggested including the number of Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) cases on dockets, case dispositions, continuations, and next hearing dates. He also mentioned instances where plea offers were withdrawn due to refusal of screening before guilty pleas.

He further outlined commitments required for program success, including acceptance by judges, Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs), and defense attorneys. He proposed developing criteria and guidelines for identifying CARS program participants and emphasized the need for mandatory utilization across all defendants. Statistical evaluation components for later implementation were suggested, such as weekly defendant counts within court systems, projected positive/negative test rates, and estimates for referrals to treatment programs.

In the summary and conclusion, Judge Jules Edwards noted successful implementation but highlighted defense attorney hesitation and inconsistent judge usage. He acknowledged a disproportionate focus on males due to their higher defendant percentage and emphasized the need to accommodate transgender defendants. He also observed initial high interest in the CARS system that waned over time, and a diverse range of disorders identified.

Dr. Smith concluded by recommending additional pilot testing, stressing the need for standardization and protocols before full implementation. Scott emphasized the evidence-based practice of screening to determine assessment needs and the use of specialized instruments like Impaired Driving Assessment (IDA), DUI Risk and Needs Triage (DUI-RANT™), and Computerized Assessment and Referral System (CARS) for OWI offenders. The importance of ongoing education for legal professionals about the value of these instruments was underscored.

*b. Early Screening for Misdemeanor DWI Offenders in the 17<sup>th</sup> JDC by District Attorney Kristine Russell and ADA Lisa Orgeron*

Kristine Russell shared in 2003 when she took office started with Lisa initially developing a proactive program for addressing impaired driving. They partnered with the Domino program focused on drunk driving and introduced driving impaired goggles in 2018. Upon becoming District Attorney in 2018, Kristine aimed to incorporate a mental health element. They already had a divergent program in place, which included a strict Pretrial Intervention (PTI) process.

Kristine's goal was to explore the mental health aspect behind offenses because she wanted to know the "WHY", leading her to hire Heidi an LCSW, to conduct assessments and screenings. These assessments helped identify the underlying reasons, and based on these findings, they referred individuals to appropriate resources and experts in the field of mental health. Compliance with the program was encouraged; however, failure to comply resulted in certain legal consequences.

Kristine garnered support from judges and other ADA's for this approach. She strongly believes that emphasis on addressing mental health should be alongside legal consideration and that other parishes should consider it and that every program should be tailored to meet the specific needs of their community.

***B. 2023 Legislative Update by Kristy Miller, Director of Drug Policy, Governor's Office***

Kristy provided a brief overview of the 45 pieces of legislation she was tracking. She informed the attendants that everyone had received a packet containing detailed information about each of the bills and could read through them at their convenience.

***C. Recommendation Workgroup Updates***

No Workgroup Updates during the meeting.

***Other Business***

*Office of Drug Policy update*

- Kristy will continue to track legislation for the Office of Drug Policy

**Member agency updates**

Lisa shared that Louisiana Highway Safety Commission will host its Impaired Driving Symposium on Wednesday July 26, 2023 in Baton Rouge, LA.

**Comments from stakeholders and members of the public**

Kristy called for comments from stakeholders and members of the public. She followed by two additional calls for comments. None were offered.

**Upcoming Meetings of Other Office of Drug Policy boards**

DWI Taskforce August 23, 2023 @ 10 AM (Moved from Aug. 16)

**Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, Kristy Miller (Office of Drug Policy) moved to adjourn the meeting 12:00 P.M. All members approved, none objected, none abstained.

## DWI TASK FORCE MEMBERS

<b>Member Agency</b>	<b>Appointee/Designee</b>	<b>Present</b>
Attorney General's Office	Amanda Martin	No
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Kristy Miller	Yes
House of Representatives member	Marcus Bryant	No
Office of Behavioral Health	Dr. Leslie Freeman	Yes
Office of Motor Vehicles	Kelly Sittig	Yes
LA District Attorneys Association	Norma DuBois	Yes
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman	Yes
Louisiana Alcohol and Tobacco Control	Ernest Legier	No
Department of Transportation and Development	Adriane McRae	Yes
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Sheriff K.P. Gibson	No
Louisiana State Police Crime Lab	Rebecca Chiasson	Yes
Louisiana State Police	Lt. Robert "Shawn" Owens	Yes
Property and Casualty Insurance Commission	Tom Travis	No
Senate Member	Vacant	--
Mothers Against Drunk Driving	Sunny House (Proxy for Kelley Dair)	Yes
LA Restaurant Association	Jeff Conaway	No
LA Association of Chiefs of Police	Chief Shayne Gibson	No
At-Large	Delia Brady	No
At-Large	Dr. Beau Clark	Yes
At-Large	Judge Jules Edwards (Ret.)	Yes

### **Guests**

Tunde Animashawn - Office of Motor Vehicles  
 Dortha Cummins - Louisiana Highway Safety Commission  
 Austin Mathews – LSU Social Research and Evaluation Center  
 Aimee Moles - LSU Social Research and Evaluation Center  
 Shayla Polk – Governor's Office of Drug Policy  
 Ashley Tillison – LSU Social Research and Evaluation Center  
 Wendy Maxwell FHWA  
 Raegan Ball- FHWA  
 Jessica Staten-UTSEFrank Barroe-NHTJA  
 Dr.Scott Smith - LSU CARTS  
 Betsey Tramoute- FHWA  
 Kristine Russel - 17<sup>th</sup> JD  
 Lisa Oregeron-17th JD  
 Heidi Erwin, LCSW-17th JD