

Louisiana

State and Local Health Equity Policy Checklist

MAY 2021

KEY

-  = state requires/mandates
-  = some local and/or state policies, but there is room for improvement
-  = no state/local requirements
-  = n/a

Legislative Reform

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Implement Racial Equity Impact Statements for legislation at the state or local levels, including environmental, health and criminal justice areas.		

Expand Health Impact Assessments attached to state and local legislation to include equity considerations.



State Health Planning & Programs

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Declare racism a public health crisis and implement steps to address it.		

Develop a 'Health in All Policies' strategy at the state or local level.



According to Louisiana's 2016 [State Health Improvement Plan](#), promoting and advocating for Health in All Policies (particularly policies that affect the people/communities who experience the greatest health disparities) is a priority for the Louisiana Office of Public Health.¹

Health in All Policies was identified as a priority in the New Orleans Health Department's [2015 Community Health Improvement Plan](#).²

Establish Health Equity Zones to better address social determinants of health.



Summary and scoring methodology reports are available at www.HealthValueHub.org/Health-Equity-Checklist.

If you know of a policy we overlooked, please contact hubinfo@altarum.org.

State Health Planning & Programs *(continued)*

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
<p>Create an Equity Strategic Plan to lay out how the state (or local entity within the state) will reduce health disparities.</p>		<p>As of 2020, offices and bureaus within the Louisiana Department of Health are required to develop Health Equity Action Teams that will meet monthly to examine data and develop strategies for improving access to health services across geographic regions, economic backgrounds and racial groups in the state.³</p>
<p>Fund community-driven health equity action plans.</p>		
<p>Implement participatory budgeting at the state and/or local level for initiatives that focus on health and social determinants of health.</p>		
<p>Emphasize health disparities and equity when developing State Health Assessments & State Health Improvement Plans</p>		<p>Health disparities are a focus of the Louisiana’s 2016-2020 State Health Assessment and Improvement Plan.⁴</p>
<p>Fund community-based organizations operating in the state to reduce disparities and/or provide culturally competent health-related supports.</p>		
<p>Implement strategies to address specific health outcomes related to inequality in social determinants of health, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease and maternal mortality, among others.</p>		<p>Louisiana’s 2016-2020 State Health Improvement Plan focuses on preventing chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, through social determinants of health interventions.⁵</p>
<p>Participate in the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), a national network of local and regional governments to address racial equity.</p>		<p>The City of New Orleans participates in GARE.⁶</p>

Data & Reporting

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
<p>Create equity reporting requirements for state and local government agencies.</p>		<p>The Louisiana Department of Health’s Health Equity Plan outlines health equity practices the department’s agencies must adopt to improve health equity. Each agency is required to adopt four action steps and monitor and report on the activities quarterly.⁷</p>

Data & Reporting *(continued)*

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Use the state’s Office of Health Equity/Disparities/Minority Health to analyze and report on existing health disparities and/or equity concerns within the state.		The Louisiana Department of Health’s Office of Community Partnerships & Health Equity reports on minority health indicators within the state. ⁸ The Bureau of Minority Health Access created a report on eliminating health disparities in 2009. ⁹
Require nonprofit hospitals to incorporate an equity component into their community health needs assessments and community health improvement plans and/or establish a minimum percentage of nonprofit hospitals’ Community Benefit that must be invested in programs targeted at reducing health disparities by addressing root causes.		
Increase the validity, use and standardization of data on race, ethnicity and/or languages spoken for state reporting requirements.		
Include socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and/or languages spoken in All-Payer Claims Database data.		Louisiana does not have an APCD as of May 2021. ¹⁰

Health Reform – Coverage

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Expand Medicaid eligibility requirements to include all adults with incomes at or below 138 percent of the federal poverty level.		Louisiana expanded Medicaid in 2016. ¹¹
Provide high-quality, affordable coverage options for people whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid, e.g., Basic Health Plan, reinsurance or augmented premium subsidies.		
Provide one-year continuous eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP.		Louisiana provides one-year continuous eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP. ¹²

Health Reform – Coverage *(continued)*

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
<p>Provide coverage options to undocumented and recent immigrants.</p>		<p>Louisiana provides Medicaid and CHIP coverage to documented immigrant children without a five-year wait.¹³ Additionally, some prenatal care is available for pregnant women, regardless of immigration status, through Louisiana’s CHIP program.¹⁴</p>

Health Reform – Delivery

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
<p>Develop Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) contract options for advancing health equity and recommend or require MCOs to complete specific health equity responsibilities.</p>		<p>Louisiana requires Medicaid MCO contractors to develop a population health strategic plan that strongly emphasizes social determinants of health. Plans must include a strategy for working with community-based organizations and/or the Department of Public Health (DPH) to address at least one discrete health inequity and describe how the MCO will identify and measure the impact of the interventions.¹⁵</p> <p>Contractors are required to report to the DPH semi-annually on the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions to reduce health disparities. Minimum reporting requirements include data on self-reported race, ethnicity, language, housing, food, transportation, employment and safety needs, care management model utilized, risk stratification criteria highlighting priority populations and targets for engagement and outcomes stratified by priority sub-group.</p> <p>MCOs are also required to hire a permanent supportive housing program liaison to provide affordable housing and tenancy supports.¹⁶</p>

<p>Encourage or require Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and/or Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to collect equity-focused data, adopt culturally appropriate programs, implement partnerships with community-based organizations in areas with larger minority populations and/or focus on addressing social determinants of health.</p>		
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<p>Employ Medicaid 1115 and/or 1915 waivers to better address the social determinants of health.</p>		<p>Louisiana’s 1915 waivers provide services to address social determinants of health, such as home delivered meals, substitute family care and housing stabilization for individuals with autism, as well as intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities.¹⁷</p>
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Health Reform – Delivery *(continued)*

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Require or incentivize providers participating in Medicaid value-based programs to report on measures related to health equity/disparities.		
Hold providers participating in Medicaid value-based programs responsible for reducing health disparities by evaluating/scoring performance in this area.		
Create or expand Accountable Communities for Health with a focus on increasing health equity.		
Prioritize funding for communication infrastructure development, including broadband and cellular access, in underserved rural and urban areas.		Louisiana's Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana (BEL) Commission aims to improve both the adoption and availability of broadband service for Louisiana residents to ensure universal access by 2029. As part of this work, the Commission plans to conduct research on the viability of creating or expanding special assessment districts at the local level to assist in deploying broadband in unserved and underserved areas. As of May 2021, the Commission does not appear to be directing funding towards broadband development efforts. ¹⁸
Subsidize internet access to expand opportunities for telehealth.		
Expand coverage for telehealth services.		Louisiana requires coverage parity for telehealth services provided by physicians. ¹⁹
Establish or strengthen telehealth reimbursement parity laws to incentivize providers to deliver these services.		Although Louisiana does not require telehealth reimbursement parity , it does require telehealth services to be reimbursed at no less than 75% of the in-person rate. ^{20,21}
Establish cost-sharing parity for telehealth services.		Louisiana does not require cost-sharing parity for telehealth services. ²²
Adopt a global budget system for paying hospitals to better enable them to focus on prevention, care coordination, community-based integration and social determinants of health.		

Health Reform – Delivery *(continued)*

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Require workplace-based cultural competency and implicit-bias training for clinicians and other providers.		<p>Louisiana does not require cultural competency training for licensed clinicians as of May 2021.²³ However, non-licensed behavioral health providers are required by the Louisiana Department of Health to complete standard basic training courses, including one on cultural and linguistic competency.²⁴</p> <p>A 2020 House resolution urged the Louisiana Department of Health to recommend standards and curricula on implicit bias in healthcare delivery.²⁵</p>

COVID-Specific Reforms

POLICY	SCORE	NOTES
Collect racial equity data to better understand the disparate impact of COVID-19.		<p>The Louisiana Department of Health reports data on COVID-19 cases, deaths and vaccinations by race.²⁶</p> <p>The Senate sent a resolution (SR 74) to the Secretary of State in June 2020 requesting the Louisiana Department of Health to study and report on racial disparities in COVID-19 death rates in the state.²⁷</p>
Implement changes to Medicaid or Marketplace enrollment, including but not limited to presumptive eligibility, cost-sharing provisions, Marketplace special enrollment periods, increased enrollment assistance and improvements to application processing in response to COVID-19.		<p>Louisiana eliminated copayments for individuals with Medicaid coverage, modified verification plans to allow post-enrollment income verification and extended the reasonable opportunity period past 90 days to resolve discrepancies in people's Medicaid applications.²⁸</p>
Leverage the Emergency Medicaid program to extend COVID-19 testing, evaluation and treatment coverage to undocumented immigrants.		<p>Louisiana is not covering COVID-19 testing and treatment through Emergency Medicaid.²⁹</p>
Waive or limit cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing and treatment by private insurers.		<p>Under Emergency Rule 36, insurers must waive cost sharing for COVID-19 testing when ordered in accordance with CDC guidelines.³⁰</p>
Provide COVID-19 testing to residents free of charge.		<p>The Louisiana Department of Health partnered with Walgreens to provide COVID-19 tests free of charge.³¹</p>

Notes

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ABOUT ALTARUM'S HEALTHCARE VALUE HUB

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