

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 219

BY SENATOR MCMATH

HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Creates the office of health and nutrition within the Louisiana Department of Health. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 36:251(C)(1), 254(B)(1)(a)(i), 257(A), and 258(A) and (B) and

3 R.S. 46:450.3(A) and to enact R.S. 36:253.1, 258(N), and 258.1, relative to the

4 Louisiana Department of Health; to create the office of health and nutrition within

5 the Louisiana Department of Health; to provide for purposes, duties, and functions

6 of the office; to provide for an executive director of the office; to provide for offices

7 under the direct supervision of the secretary; to provide for an effective date; and to

8 provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 36:251(C)(1), 254(B)(1)(a)(i), 257(A), and 258(A) and (B) are hereby

11 amended and reenacted and R.S. 36:253.1, 258(N), and 258.1 are hereby enacted to read as

12 follows:

13 §251. Louisiana Department of Health; creation; domicile; composition; purpose

14 and functions

15 * * *

16 C.(1) The Louisiana Department of Health shall be composed of the

17 executive office of the secretary, the office of the surgeon general, the office of

1 management and finance, the office of public health, the office of behavioral health,
2 the office for citizens with developmental disabilities, the office of aging and adult
3 services, the office on women's health and community health, **the office of health**
4 **and nutrition**, and such other offices as shall be created by law.

5 * * *

6 **§253.1. Executive office of the secretary; certain offices**

7 **A. The provisions of this Section shall apply to the following offices**
8 **within the Louisiana Department of Health:**

9 **(1) The executive office of the secretary.**

10 **(2) The office of health and nutrition.**

11 **B. The offices shall be under the direct supervision, direction, and**
12 **control of the secretary.**

13 **C. The duties and functions of these offices shall be determined by the**
14 **secretary and shall be exercised under the direct supervision and control of the**
15 **secretary.**

16 §254. Powers and duties of the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health

17 * * *

18 B. The secretary shall have authority to:

19 (1)(a) Except as otherwise specifically provided in R.S. 36:801 and 803:

20 (i) Employ, appoint, remove, assign, and promote such personnel as is
21 necessary for the efficient administration of the executive office of the secretary **and**
22 **the office of health and nutrition** and the performance of ~~its~~ **the offices'** powers,
23 duties, functions, and responsibilities and such other personnel, who are not assigned
24 to an office, as may be necessary for the efficient administration of the department
25 and for the performance of the responsibilities, powers, duties, and functions of
26 agencies transferred to it.

27 * * *

28 §257. Assistant secretaries

29 A. Each office within the Louisiana Department of Health, except **the**

1 **executive office of the secretary**, the office of management and finance, **the office**
 2 **of health and nutrition**, and the office of the surgeon general, shall be under the
 3 immediate supervision and direction of an assistant secretary, who shall be appointed
 4 by the governor with consent of the Senate. Each shall serve at the pleasure of the
 5 governor and shall be paid a salary which shall be fixed by the governor, which
 6 salary shall not exceed the amount approved for such position by the legislature
 7 while in session.

8 * * *

9 §258. Offices; purposes and functions

10 A. The purposes for which the offices of the Louisiana Department of Health,
 11 **other than the executive office of the secretary and the office of management**
 12 **and finance**, are created shall be set forth in this Section.

13 B. The office of public health shall perform the functions of the state which
 14 relate to the general health of the people of the state, including but not limited to
 15 responsibility for the preparation and supervision of the Sanitary Code, local health
 16 units, sewage treatment and disposal within the state, ~~physical fitness, supplemental~~
 17 ~~food programs for women, infants, and children~~, emergency medical services, and
 18 related functions affecting the public health. It shall also perform those functions of
 19 the state provided by law relating to environmental quality and pollution control
 20 which are related to the public health and which are specifically assigned to the
 21 department, including but not limited to functions relating to the treatment and
 22 disposal of sewage within the state, with the exception of those functions assigned
 23 by law to the Department of Environmental Quality including, but not limited to, the
 24 licensing of sewage sludge transporters or haulers.

25 * * *

26 **N. The office of health and nutrition shall be responsible for leading and**
 27 **coordinating efforts within the Louisiana Department of Health that are**
 28 **intended to promote health and nutrition, healthcare access, preventative**
 29 **healthcare services, chronic disease prevention and management programs,**

1 physical fitness, and health outcomes, including supplemental nutrition
2 assistance services and commodity programs for women, infants, and children.

3 * * *

4 §258.1. Office of health and nutrition

5 A. The department shall have an executive director for the office of
6 health and nutrition that reports directly to the secretary.

7 B. The office of health and nutrition shall be responsible for:

8 (1) Leading and coordinating the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness
9 and Sports, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women,
10 Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program
11 (CSFP).

12 (2) Developing and strengthening policy to increase access to and
13 consumption of healthy foods among recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition
14 Assistance Program (SNAP).

15 (3) Leading and coordinating department initiatives that include
16 addressing health and nutrition, healthcare access, preventative healthcare
17 services, and chronic disease prevention and management programs.

18 (4) Coordinating with the office of adult and aging service and the office
19 of public health to provide public education on risk reduction strategies for
20 Alzheimer's and related dementias, including the diseases' links to other chronic
21 diseases.

22 Section 2. R.S. 46:450.3(A) is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

23 §450.3. WIC participants; homeless

24 A. The office of ~~public health~~ health and nutrition within the Louisiana
25 Department of Health shall adopt rules and regulations for the WIC program in
26 accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to provide nonperishable food
27 items to women and children. Such rules shall provide for the distribution of WIC
28 vouchers, in small quantities on a frequent basis, for food items that do not require
29 refrigeration or storage to eligible WIC participants that have been identified by

1 qualified organizations as being homeless. Such rules shall comply with
2 requirements of federal laws and regulations in order to ensure receipt of federal
3 funding for the program.

4 * * *

5 Section 3. The Louisiana Department of Health is authorized to transfer funding and
6 positions within the department to establish and implement the office of health and nutrition.

7 Section 4. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
8 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
9 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
10 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
11 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services.
The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof
or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

DIGEST

SB 219 Engrossed

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McMath

Present law provides for the following composition of the La. Dept. of Health: the executive office of the secretary, the office of the surgeon general, the office of management and finance, the office of public health, the office of behavioral health, the office for citizens with developmental disabilities, the office of aging and adult services, and the office on women's health and community health.

Present law provides that the office of public health is responsible for functions which relate to the general health of the people of the state, including physical fitness and supplemental food programs for women, infants, and children.

Proposed law creates the office of health and nutrition within the La. Dept. of Health.

Proposed law provides that the office is responsible for leading and coordinating efforts intended to promote health and nutrition, healthcare access, preventative healthcare services, chronic disease prevention and management programs, physical fitness, and health outcomes, including supplemental nutrition assistance services and commodity programs for women, infants, and children.

Proposed law further requires the office to coordinate with the office of adult and aging services and the office of public health to provide public education on risk reduction strategies for Alzheimer's and related dementias, included the diseases' links to other chronic diseases.

Proposed law provides for an executive director for the office that reports directly to the secretary.

Proposed law provides that the executive office of the secretary and the office of health and

nutrition shall be under the direct supervision, direction, and control of the secretary of the La. Dept. of Health.

Proposed law authorizes the La. Dept. of Health to transfer funding and positions within the department to establish and implement the office of health and nutrition.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 36:251(C)(1), 254(B)(1)(a)(i), 257(A), and 258(A) and (B) and R.S. 46:450.3(A); adds R.S. 36:253.1, 258(N), and 258.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill

1. Adds chronic disease prevention and management programs, healthcare access, and preventative healthcare services to the purview of the office of health and nutrition.
2. Changes the office's responsibility regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
3. Adds coordination with the office of adult and aging services and the office of public health to provide public education on risk reduction strategies for Alzheimer's and related dementias to the office's purview.