

2021 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 133

BY SENATOR BARROW

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Health Department: Provides relative to the prioritization of health equity by the Louisiana Department of Health. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 40:1263 and 1264, relative to equity in health care services; to provide for the
3 duties of the Louisiana Department of Health; to provide for best practices and
4 protocols for treating communities with underlying medical conditions and health
5 disparities; to establish and provide for the division of women's health; to provide for
6 the purposes, duties, and functions of the division of women's health; to provide for
7 an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 40:1263 and 1264 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 **§1263. Health equity; duties of the Louisiana Department of Health**

11 **A. The Louisiana Department of Health, in addition to the other powers**
12 **and duties conferred upon it by law, shall serve as a foundation and resource for**
13 **addressing health care disparities for women and vulnerable populations, and**
14 **contribute to the improvement of the health of Louisiana's citizens. Specific to**
15 **the improvement in the health of women in Louisiana, the Louisiana**
16 **Department of Health shall be responsible for leading, consolidating, and**
17 **coordinating efforts across the state geared toward improving women's health**

1 outcomes through policy, education, evidence-based practices, programs, and
2 services.

3 B. As part of carrying out the duties provided for in Subsection A of this
4 Section, the Louisiana Department of Health shall engage in all of the following
5 activities:

6 (1) Complete a thorough assessment of all activities engaged in or
7 services provided by the state that may specifically impact the health or quality
8 of life of women, including but not limited to those of the governor's office,
9 Louisiana Department of Health, Department of Children and Family Services,
10 Department of Education, and the various higher education institutions. The
11 department shall submit this assessment to the House Committee on Health and
12 Welfare and Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than December
13 15, 2021.

14 (2) Make available to health care professionals the best practices and
15 protocols for treating communities with underlying medical conditions and
16 health disparities by doing all of the following:

17 (a) Examining opportunities which provide greater access to high
18 quality medical care and improve health outcomes.

19 (b) Performing a comprehensive evidenced-based analysis of the
20 determinants of health equity that influence racial health disparities.

21 (c) Performing a comprehensive evidenced-based analysis of
22 interventions that positively impact health equity and address disparities.

23 (d) Performing a comprehensive examination of the population dynamics
24 that are indicative of health equity and disparities.

25 (e) Promoting health awareness educational media campaigns.

26 C. To assist in carrying out its duties pursuant to this Section, the
27 Louisiana Department of Health may analyze any other relevant data which will
28 add to the work of the department, seek input from any interested parties
29 including but not limited to licensed health care professionals, advocates, and

1 concerned citizens, pursue any relevant topics including policies and laws that
2 impact health disparities, and promote community outreach and extension
3 activities.

4 **§1264. Division of Women's Health, duties and functions**

5 **A. The division of women's health shall be created within the Louisiana**
6 **Department of Health, office of public health no later than July 1, 2022.**

7 **B.(1) During Fiscal Year 2021-2022 prior to the division's creation, the**
8 **secretary of the department and assistant secretary of the office of public health**
9 **shall utilize existing staff and resources within the department to do all of the**
10 **following:**

11 **(a) Complete the assessment of women's services provided by the state**
12 **as required in R.S. 40:1263(B)(1).**

13 **(b) Develop a detailed plan for the evolution of workload, anticipated**
14 **staffing needs, and estimated costs of the division for Fiscal Years 2022-2023,**
15 **2023-2024, and 2024-2025 and submit the plan to the House Committee on**
16 **Appropriations, House Committee on Health and Welfare, Senate Committee**
17 **on Finance, and Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than**
18 **January 15, 2022.**

19 **(c) Begin identifying potential non-state funding sources to aid in**
20 **financing the activities of the division.**

21 **(2) The Louisiana Department of Health shall include within its budget**
22 **request submission to the governor for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and each year**
23 **thereafter a request to fund the division of women's health.**

24 **C.(1) In Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the division of women's health shall**
25 **utilize the assessment of women's services provided by the state as required in**
26 **R.S. 40:1263(B)(1) and the plan developed pursuant to Subsection B of this**
27 **Section to begin its work on improving the health of women residing in**
28 **Louisiana.**

29 **(2) The initial staff for the division shall include, at a minimum, a**

1 director to lead the division and a position to research, apply for, and oversee
2 grant funding to support the work of the division.

3 D. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and thereafter, the division of
4 women's health shall be responsible for all of the following activities:

5 (1) Educating and advocating for women's health by establishing, either
6 on its own or in partnership with other entities, appropriate forums, programs,
7 or initiatives designed to educate the public regarding women's health, with an
8 emphasis on preventive health and healthy lifestyles.

9 (2) Identifying, coordinating, and establishing priorities for programs,
10 services, and resources for women's health issues and concerns.

11 (3) Serving as a clearinghouse and resource regarding women's health
12 data, strategies, services, and programs that address women's health issues.

13 (4) Collecting, classifying, and analyzing relevant research information
14 and data conducted or compiled by the Louisiana Department of Health or
15 other collaborative entities and provide persons with information regarding the
16 research results, except as prohibited by law.

17 (5) Developing and recommending funding and program activities for
18 educating the public on women's health initiatives relating to the social
19 determinants of health including all of the following:

20 (a) Health needs throughout a woman's life.

21 (b) Chronic conditions that significantly affect women, such as heart
22 disease, cancer, and osteoporosis.

23 (c) Access to health care for women.

24 (d) Poverty and women's health.

25 (e) The leading causes of morbidity and mortality for women.

26 (f) Health disparities of women.

27 (6) Making recommendations to the secretary of the Louisiana
28 Department of Health regarding programs that address women's health issues
29 for inclusion in the department's budget and strategic planning.

1 **(7) Seeking funding from private or other governmental entities to carry**
 2 **out the purposes, duties, and functions of the division of women's health.**

3 **(8) Preparing materials for publication and dissemination to the public**
 4 **on women's health.**

5 **(9) Conducting public educational forums in Louisiana to raise public**
 6 **awareness and to educate citizens about women's health programs, issues, and**
 7 **services.**

8 **(10) Coordinating the activities and programs of the division of women's**
 9 **health with other entities that focus on women's health or women's issues.**

10 **(11) Provide an annual report to the governor, legislature, and secretary**
 11 **of the Louisiana Department of Health on the priorities and services needed for**
 12 **women's health in Louisiana and areas for improvement.**

13 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
 14 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
 15 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
 16 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
 17 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 Brandi Cannon.

DIGEST

SB 133 Engrossed

2021 Regular Session

Barrow

Proposed law provides that the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), in addition to the other powers and duties conferred upon it by law, shall serve as a foundation and resource for addressing health care disparities for women and vulnerable populations and contribute to the improvement of the health of Louisiana's citizens.

Proposed law provides that LDH shall be responsible for leading, consolidating, and coordinating efforts across the state geared toward improving women's health outcomes through policy, education, evidence-based practices, programs, and services.

Proposed law provides that LDH shall complete a thorough assessment of all state activities or services that may specifically impact the health or quality of life of women, including but not limited to those of the governor's office, LDH, Dept. of Children and Family Services, Dept. of Education, and the various higher education institutions. Proposed law requires LDH to submit this assessment to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare no later than December 15, 2021.

Proposed law provides that LDH shall make available to health care professionals the best practices and protocols for treating communities with underlying medical conditions and health disparities by doing certain enumerated tasks.

Proposed law provides that LDH may analyze any other relevant data which will add to the work of the department, seek input from any interested parties including but not limited to licensed health care professionals, advocates, and concerned citizens, pursue any relevant topics including policies and laws that impact health disparities, and promote community outreach and extension activities.

Proposed law provides for the division on women's health within LDH's office of public health and establishes a time lime for the planning for and creation of the division. Proposed law provides for the staff, duties, and functions of the division.

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

(Adds R.S. 40:1263 and 1264)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

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

1. Adds the requirement for LDH to address health care disparities for women.
2. Establishes and provides a timeline for the division of women's health within LDH.
3. Provides for the staff, duties, and functions of the division.
4. Changes the effect date to upon signature of the governor.
5. Makes technical changes.