

**Agenda Item VII.F.3.**  
**RESPONSE TO SENATE RESOLUTION 190**  
**OF THE 2019 REGULAR SESSION**  
**OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE**

**LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS**



**January 2020**

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## **Introduction**

Senate Resolution 190 of the 2019 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature (SR 190) charged the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) to “study how the state can optimally meet the oral health needs of our citizens through the establishment of a school of dentistry in northern Louisiana.” SR 190 requests a “report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate Committee on Education and House Committee on Education.” The full resolution is attached as Appendix A.

## **Methodology**

As provided in Article VIII, Section 5.(D)(3)(a) of the 1974 Louisiana Constitution the Board of Regents, as related to public institutions of postsecondary education, shall have the responsibility “to study the need for and feasibility of creating a new institution of postsecondary education, which includes establishing a branch of such an institution.” If a new institution is proposed, the Board “shall report its written findings and recommendations to the legislature within one year.”

In conducting this study, BOR staff completed the following tasks:

- I. Review and synthesis of oral health needs in North Louisiana utilizing existing Louisiana Department of Health data concerning:
  - Prevalence of disease
  - Disparities in access to oral health
- II. Examination of dental healthcare workforce needs in North Louisiana
- III. Assessment of the dental school educational demand analyzing:
  - Current institutional offerings
  - Number of applicants, enrollments, and completers in each program.
- IV. Analysis of the financial costs of operation of the existing dental school in Louisiana: Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-New Orleans School of Dentistry (LSUHSC-NO SD)

To complete the project, BOR staff reviewed several recent studies relevant to the work. Chief among these were:

- “Closing the Gap on Dental HPSAs: Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Assessment” prepared by Louisiana Department of Health in August 2018
- “Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Expansion Program” prepared by the Louisiana Public Health Institute in August 2018

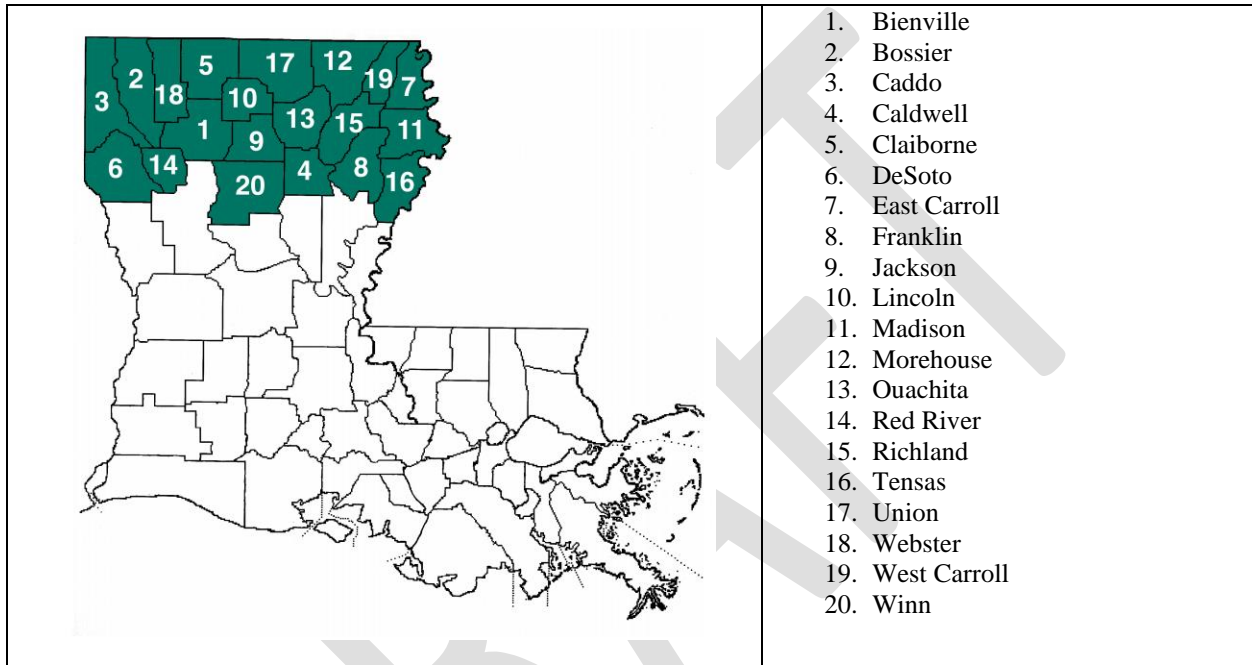
As further context-setting work, BOR staff conducted semi-structured interviews with individuals who offered different perspectives on the oral health and educational needs in the region. Included among these interviewees were:

- Local dentists and health care professionals
- Deans of educational institutions in the region
- Heads of colleges and university systems

From these sources, the data and information were gleaned which led to the conclusions and recommendations within the report.

In this study, “North Louisiana” was defined utilizing the virtual map maintained by the Center for Louisiana Studies. This map identifies 20 parishes as comprising North Louisiana,<sup>1</sup> as shown in Figure 1. This group which will be referred to as North Louisiana for the purposes of this legislative response.

**Figure 1:** North LA Parishes



Source: Adapted from Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette. (2016).

## **I. Oral Health in North Louisiana**

Oral health, as defined by the Louisiana Department of Health, is the health of the mouth, teeth, and gums. In the Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Assessment of 2018, oral health is cited as a “critical challenge for both adults and children, affecting their overall health and quality of life and is essential for health development and aging.”<sup>2</sup> To assess the need for a dental school in North Louisiana, this analysis first examined the oral health needs in the region, specifically analyzing the prevalence of disease and disparities in access to oral health care.

### *A. Prevalence of Disease*

#### *1. Children*

Oral health is important to overall health. Oral health among children affects not only their physical wellbeing, but also their self-esteem and academic success, making preventative care crucial to their current and future quality of life. The 2017-2018 Bright Smiles for Bright Future: Basic Screening Survey (BSS) revealed that, overall, oral health among children is improving in Louisiana, as compared to the 2007-2009 reporting (See Table 1).<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Oral Health Among Children in Louisiana**

<b>Findings</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007-2009</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Untreated cavities (%)	38.1	37.3	41.9	26.2
Dental sealants (%)	22.1	18	33.2	28.7
Referred for treatment (%)	34.7	38.5	42.7	23.1

Source: Adapted from Louisiana Department of Health (2018). Bright Smiles for Bright Futures Report, Findings from Louisiana’s Oral Health Basic Screening Survey, 2017-2018.

**Table 2: Prevalence of Disease in North Louisiana, Children (ages 6 to 9 years old) 2017-2018**

<b>Findings</b>	<b>North LA Percentage</b>	<b>Statewide Percentage</b>
Untreated cavities (%)	23.0	26.2
Dental sealants (%)	29.8	28.7
Referred for treatment (%)	14.2	23.1

Source: Adapted from Louisiana Department of Health (2018). Bright Smiles for Bright Futures Report, Findings from Louisiana’s Oral Health Basic Screening Survey, 2017-2018.

Table 2 details the prevalence of disease in North Louisiana children compared to the state rate. The statewide findings for oral health among children is improving (per Table 1), which includes a slight decrease in untreated cavities in North Louisiana. It can also be noted the presence of dental sealants remains higher in North Louisiana.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Adults

Adults in Louisiana remain below the national average in oral health indicators. Far below the national average of 67.6% of adults visiting a dentist, only 58.1% of adults in Louisiana reported a dental visit in 2018.<sup>4</sup> As indicated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics in Table 3, Louisiana citizens remain below the national average in oral health indicators among adults and there are oral health disparities present in Louisiana that need to be addressed.<sup>2,4</sup>

**Table 3: Comparative Dental Outcomes**

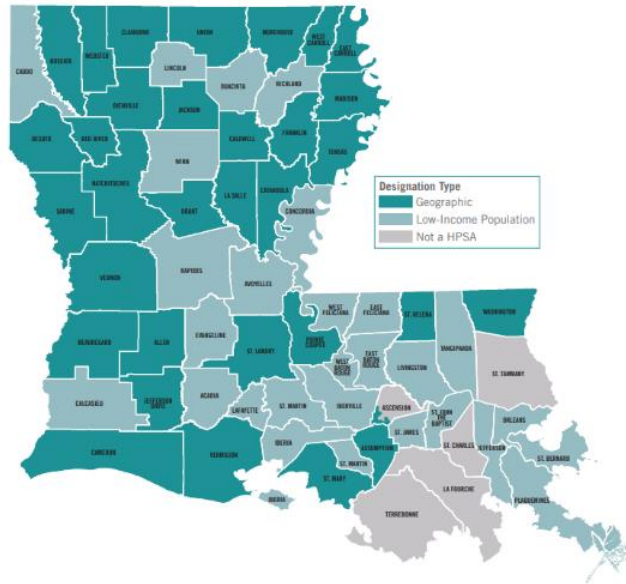
<b>Dental Outcomes</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Louisiana</b>
Adult Tooth Removal	41.3%	49%
Adult Dental Visit	67.6%	58.1%

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. (2018). BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data.

### B. Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas

Oral health care is provided by dentists and dental hygienists, with support from dental assistants. Dentists provide diagnostic, preventative, therapeutic and restorative oral health services. In Louisiana 84% of the state falls within a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).<sup>2</sup> Compiled by the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, Figure 2 reveals dental care shortages which may be due to geography, whether population or facility-based.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 2:** Louisiana Dental HPSAs



Source: Louisiana Department of Health, Well-Ahead LA (2019) *Dental HPSAs*.

The HPSA score indicates the shortage of dentists based on the population-to-provider ratio. With a scale ranging from zero to 26, higher numbers indicate a greater population-to-provider ratio. Table 4 indicates the HPSA scores of each North Louisiana parish, showing that 11 of the 20 North Louisiana parishes have an HPSA of 20 or higher. Data indicate a substantial dental professional shortage in rural parishes such as East Carroll (23), Franklin (22), Lincoln (22), and Tensas (22).<sup>5</sup>

**Table 4:** HPSA Scores of North Louisiana Parishes

Parish	HPSA Score	Parish	HPSA Score
Bienville	20	Madison	20
Bossier	6	Morehouse	16
Caddo	19	Ouachita	20
Caldwell	12	Red River	20
Claiborne	16	Richland	16
DeSoto	20	Tensas	22
East Carroll	23	Union	20
Franklin	22	Webster	16
Jackson	20	West Carroll	12
Lincoln	22	Winn	16

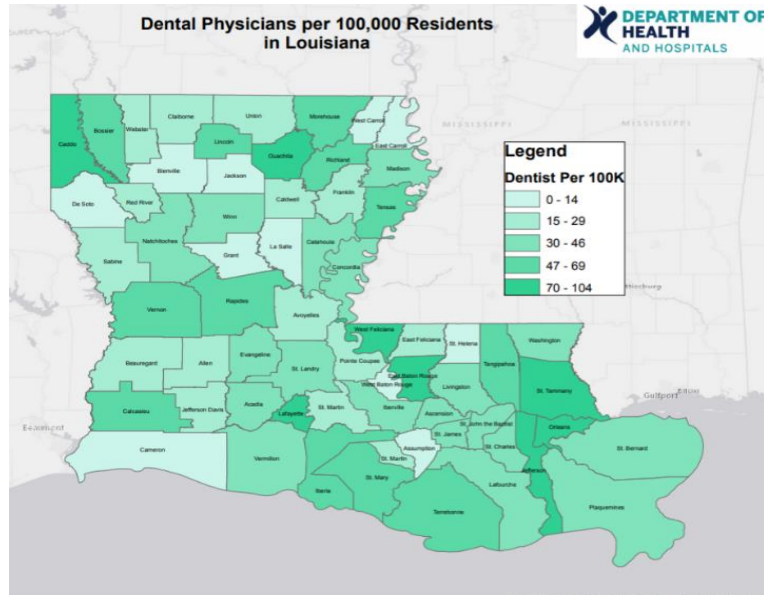
Source: Louisiana Department of Health, Well-Ahead LA (2019) *Dental HPSAs*.

## II. Dental Workforce and Capacity

In the United States in 2018, the number of dentists per 100,000 people was 60.9, while Louisiana had a ratio of 47.81 dentists per 100,000 people.<sup>8</sup> Figure 3 and Table 5, compiled with information from the Louisiana Department of Health, depict the state’s supply of dentists per 100,000 residents in 2019. Louisiana has fewer dentists per 100,000 residents in rural parishes,

while the supply of dentists in urban parishes is higher than the statewide average.<sup>6</sup> The rural communities, in parishes with lighter shading, correspond to areas deemed health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). Residents in Louisiana face many barriers to receiving oral health care; one barrier is the lack of oral health care professionals, particularly among low-income, minority, and rural populations.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 3**



Source: Louisiana Department of Health (2019). *Dental Physicians per 100,000 Residents in Louisiana*.

**Table 5:** Number of Dentists in North Louisiana Parishes

Parish	HPSA Score	Number of Dentists	Parish	HPSA Score	Number of Dentists
Bienville	20	2	Madison	20	1
Bossier	6	25	Morehouse	16	6
Caddo	19	153	Ouachita	20	80
Caldwell	12	3	Red River	20	1
Claiborne	16	3	Richland	16	10
DeSoto	20	2	Tensas	22	1
East Carroll	23	1	Union	20	4
Franklin	22	3	Webster	16	10
Jackson	20	2	West Carroll	12	5
Lincoln	22	15	Winn	16	4

Source: Louisiana Department of Health (2019). *Dental Physicians per 100,000 Residents in Louisiana*. & Louisiana Department of Health, Well-Ahead LA (2019) *Dental HPSAs*.

According to the Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Long-Term Occupational Projections, by 2026, a total of 220 additional dentists will be needed to service Region 7 (the ten parishes in the Shreveport labor market region) and Region 8 (the 11 parishes in the Monroe labor market region), filling new jobs or meeting the replacement needs of employers.<sup>7</sup>



A. Diversity (in Age, Ethnicity, and Race)

According to data from the American Dental Association’s Health Policy Institute as well as the Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Assessment, Louisiana follows a similar trajectory to the nation regarding its dentist workforce. The average age of dentists has increased, more dentists are female, and dentists are waiting longer to retire.<sup>2,8, 9</sup>

**Table 6:** National Dental Workforce

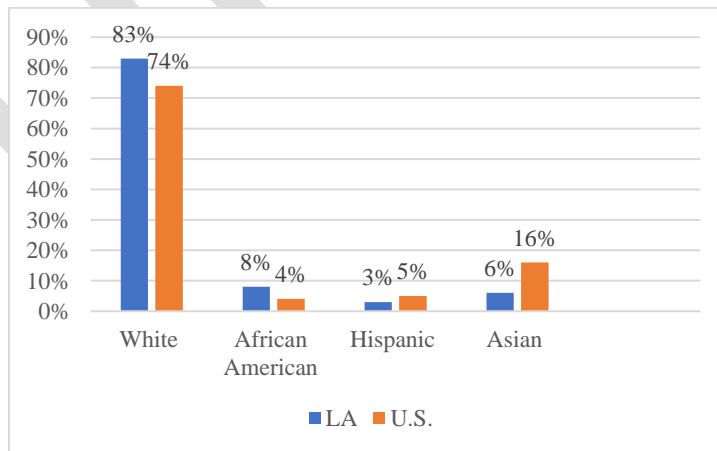
	2005	2015
Average age of dentists is increasing	48.5	50
Average age of dentists at retirement is increasing	66.1	68.8
Higher share of dentists are female	20%	29%
Proportion of female dental school graduates is growing	43.8%	48%

Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (2019). *The Dentist Workforce- Key Facts*.

Ethnic and racial diversity among dentists is not representative of the U.S. population, with more White and Asian dentists represented in the profession compared to the U.S. population, and less representation of Hispanic and African American dentists. To address and improve the racial diversity among dental candidates, LSUHSC-NO SD implemented the Summer Enrichment Program in 2008 with a goal of increasing the number of underrepresented minority students applying and being accepted into dental school. As of 2014, of the 79 participants who attended this program, 32 had enrolled or were accepted into dental schools.<sup>2</sup>

According to the American Dental Association’s Health Policy Institute in 2016, 17% of the licensed dentists in Louisiana are minorities. Of those, only 8% are African American which, although higher than the national average of 4%, still does not reflect Louisiana’s population.<sup>8</sup> According to 2014 U.S. Census data, 63.4% of Louisiana’s population is white and 32.5% is African American, with the remaining population comprised of other minorities.<sup>10</sup>

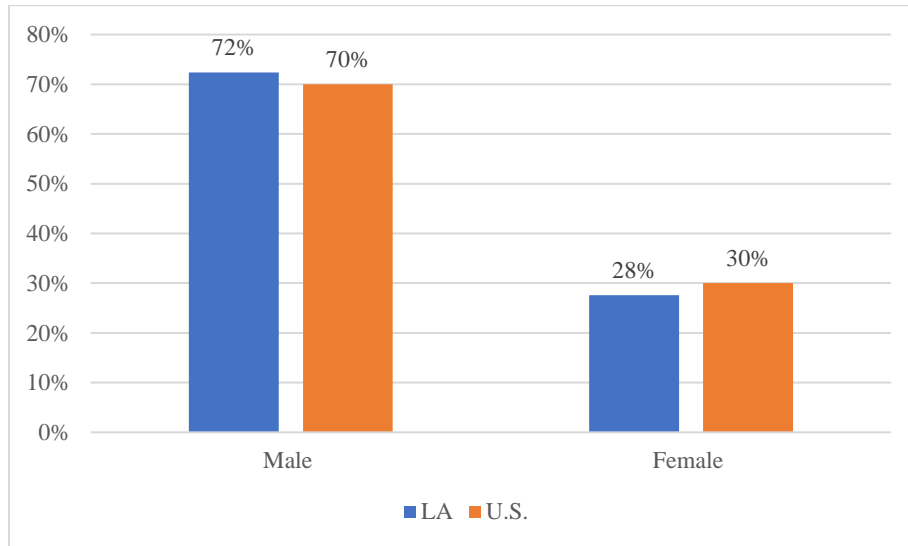
**Figure 4:** Dentist Workforce by Race/Ethnicity, 2016



Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (January 2018). *Dentist Profile Snapshot by State 2016*.

Licensed female dentists make up 28% of the workforce in Louisiana, while females represent 51% of the state population.<sup>8,10</sup> LSUHSC-NO SD has seen an increase in applications from and admission of female students. The incoming class of 2019 was 60% female at LSUHSC-NO SD, within the range of the 40-65% female student population since 2009.<sup>11</sup>

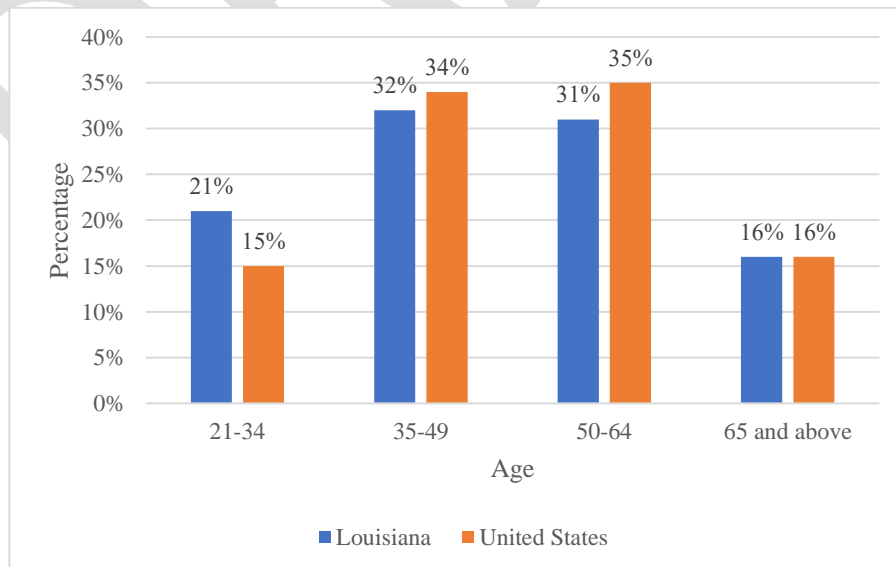
**Figure 5: Dentist Workforce by Gender, 2016**



Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (January 2018). *Dentist Profile Snapshot by State 2016*.

The average age of practicing dentists in Louisiana is 49.2, which falls below the national average of 50.1 years old. Louisiana has a higher average, compared nationally, of dentists under 35 and matches the national average in dentists 65 and older.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 6: Dentist Workforce by Age Group, 2016**



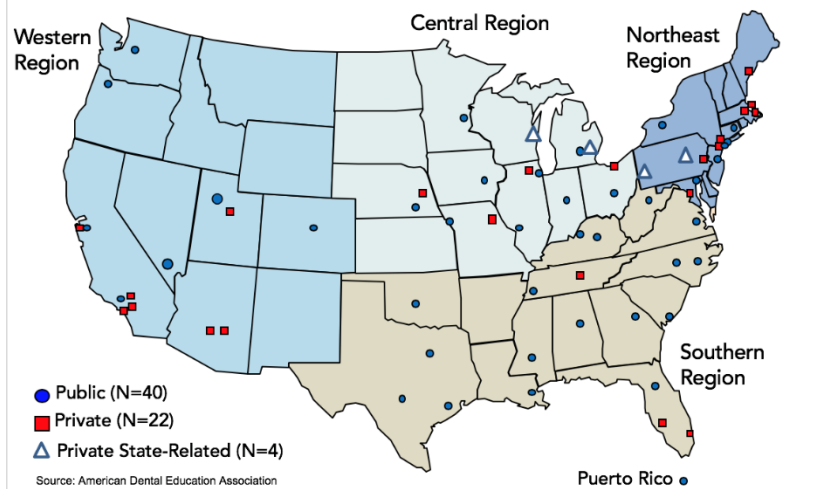
Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (January 2018). *Dentist Profile Snapshot by State 2016*.

### III. Dental Educational Capacity

#### A. Regional Institutions

To become a dentist, an individual must complete an accredited four-year doctoral-level dental degree. According to the American Dental Education Association, there are 66 accredited public and private dental schools in the United States. LSUHSC-NO SD is the only training institution for dentists in the state. There are 16 public schools of dentistry within the southern region, wherein only Kentucky, North Carolina, and Texas have more than one public school of dentistry, and Arkansas has none<sup>13</sup> (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7:** Distribution of Public and Private U.S. Dental Schools with 2017 Entering Classes



Source: American Dental Education Association (2017). *Educational Institutions, D.D.S./D.M.D. Map*.

**Table 7:** Southern Region States with 2 + Dental Schools

School	Location	2018-2019 Entering Class Size
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Dentistry	Houston, TX	105
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School	San Antonio, TX	104
Texas A&M University College of Dentistry	Dallas, TX	105
University of Kentucky College of Dentistry	Lexington, KY	65
University of Louisville School of Dentistry	Louisville, KY	120
East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine	Greenville, NC	52
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Dentistry	Chapel Hill, NC	84

Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (2019). *Dental Education, Report 1: Academic Programs, Enrollment, and Graduates*.

**Table 8:** Southern Region States with 2 + Dental Schools, State Population and HPSA Designation

State	Population Size	Total Dental HPSA Designations	Percentage of Need Met*	Practitioners Needed to Remove HPSA Designation
Louisiana	4.65 million	149	53.96%	254
Texas	28.7 million	290	44.5%	328
Kentucky	4.46 million	167	40.8%	109
North Carolina	10.38 million	175	19.5%	489

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation (2019) Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) & United States Census Bureau (2018) *QuickFacts Population Estimates July 1, 2018*.

\*Percentage of Need Met is computed by dividing the number of dentists available to serve the population of the area, group or facility by the number of dentists that would be necessary to eliminate the HPSA.

Table 7 details the states in the southern region with more than one dental school as well as the entering class size of each institutions, while Table 8 indicates the number of HPSAs in the state.<sup>14,15</sup> Although Texas and Kentucky have more than one dental school, their percentage of need met remains above 40%, indicating significant gaps in service to their populations. By comparison Louisiana has less dental HPSA designations, according to this study, than Texas, Kentucky, and North Carolina, all states with more than one dental school.

Most first-year dental students from Louisiana attend LSUHSC-NO SD. Table 9 indicates that 18 Louisiana residents attended dental school outside of Louisiana in 2018-2019, while Table 10 shows that only seven of the 75 first-year students at the LSUHSC-NO SD were out-of-state residents.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 9:** First-Year Louisiana Residents in United States Dental Schools, 2018-2019

School	State	Number of Students
Western University of Health Sciences	CA	1
Howard University	DC	3
LSU Health Science Center-New Orleans	LA	68
University of Maryland	MD	1
University of Missouri, Kansas City	MO	1
Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health	MO	2
Meharry Medical College	TN	7
University of Texas at Houston	TX	1
Roseman University of Health Sciences	UT	1
Marquette University	WI	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>86</b>

Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (2019). *Dental Education, Report 1: Academic Programs, Enrollment and Graduates*.

**Table 10:** LSU Health Science Center-New Orleans School of Dentistry  
*State of Residence of First-Year (United States) Dental Students, 2018-2019*

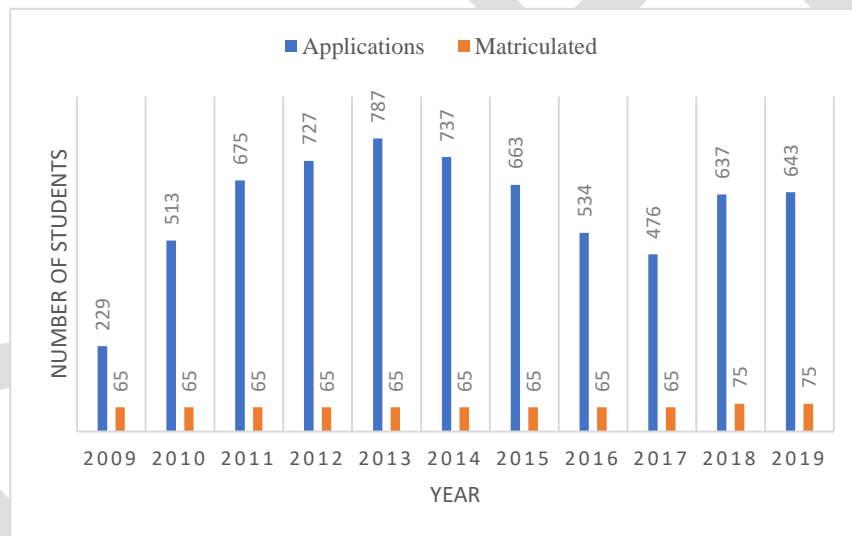
State	Number of Students
Arkansas	4
Florida	1
Georgia	1
Louisiana	68
Wisconsin	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

Source: American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute (2019). *Dental Education, Report 1: Academic Programs, Enrollment, and Graduates*.

**B. LSUHSC-NO SD**

Since 1968 close to 6,000 dentists have graduated from LSUHSC-NO SD. Today, approximately 80 percent of the dental professionals in Louisiana are graduates of the SD in New Orleans.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 8:** LSUHSC-NO SD Applications and Matriculation Trends



To gain admission to LSUHSC-NO SD Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) program, candidates must complete a minimum of 90 hours of undergraduate courses, including prerequisite courses, although a four-year degree is preferred. Applicants must also complete the Dental Admission Test (DAT) and provide supporting materials such as evaluation letters. LSUHSC-NO SD gives preference to residents of Louisiana and considers up to 15 students from Arkansas under the Arkansas Health Education Loan program.<sup>16</sup> Tables 11 and 12 detail the recent data on the grade point average (GPA) and DAT scores of students accepted to LSUHSC-NO SD. According to the institution, approximately 50% of applicants who apply have below-average GPA and DAT scores. Table 13 indicates the number of completers, i.e., those earning a DDS from LSUHSC-NO SD.

**Table 11:** LSUHSC-NO SD Average Applicant GPA

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
3.61	3.7	3.65	3.57	3.64

**Table 12:** LSUHSC-NO SD Average Applicant DAT

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
DAT Academic Average (AA)	20.92	20.3	20.5	20.2	20.8
DAT Perceptual Ability (PAT)	19.8	20.3	20.4	20	20.7

**Table 13:** LSUHSC-NO SD Completers

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
63	64	64	63	59

Source: LSUHSC-NO SD (2019) *School of Dentistry status update submitted to BOR.*

In addition to degrees in dentistry, LSUHSC-NO SD offers degrees in dental hygiene and dental laboratory technology. Two other institutions in North Louisiana, not affiliated with LSUHSC-NO SD, have dental hygiene programs: the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) and Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA).<sup>17,18</sup> Further, LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport offers two post-professional programs: Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinical Fellowships in Oncology and Craniofacial.<sup>19</sup> As a component of clinical education, LSUHSC-NO SD provides patient services in New Orleans and across the state, including student, resident and faculty clinics. Table 14 shows the dental clinics provided by LSUHSC-NO SD.<sup>20</sup> The campus does not currently provide dental clinics in North Louisiana.

**Table 14:** LSUHSC-NO SD Clinics around the State

City	Location
Baton Rouge, LA	LSUHSC School of Dentistry General Residency Clinic
Baton Rouge, LA	LSU Health Baton Rouge Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic
Pineville, LA	Pinecrest Supports and Services Center
Houma, LA	Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center
Lafayette, LA	LSUHSC School of Dentistry Dental Hygiene Clinic
New Orleans, LA	LSUSD Student and Resident Clinics, Faculty Dental Practice, Orthodontics Faculty Practice, Pediatric Dentistry Faculty Practice
New Orleans, LA	Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans
New Orleans, LA	Children's Hospital
New Orleans, LA	HIV Outpatient Dental Clinic
New Orleans, LA	St. Thomas Community Health Center- Columbia Parc Location

Source: Louisiana State University Health Science Center New Orleans, School of Dentistry (2019). *LSUSD Clinics Around the State.*

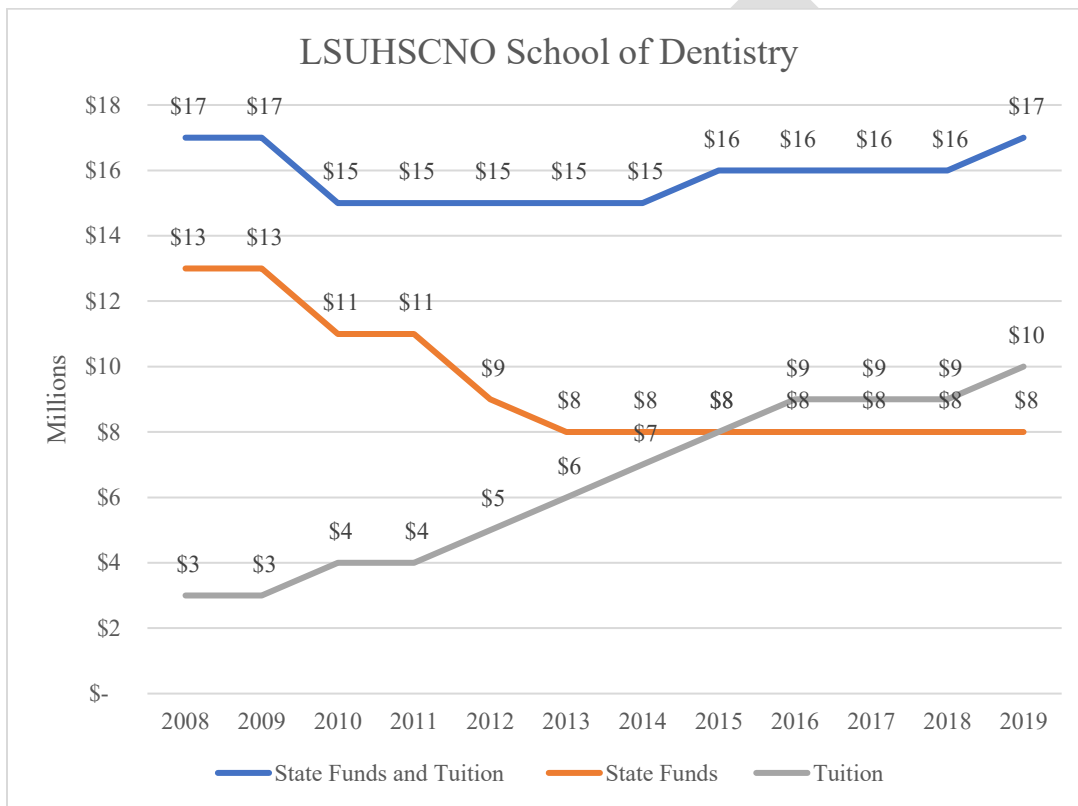
ULM and SUSLA both have student clinics supporting oral health needs in North Louisiana. ULM supports oral health through its on-campus dental hygiene clinic, the mobile dental hygiene

unit, and the school-based dental hygiene clinic at Riser Elementary and Middle School.<sup>17</sup> SUSLA, which also has a dental hygiene program, has a campus clinic that provides oral health services such as teeth cleaning and dentist referrals for Shreveport residents.<sup>18</sup>

*C. LSUHSC-NO SD Finances*

Figure 9 depicts LSUHSC-NO SD revenue since 2008, showing a decrease in state funds since 2011 and an increase in tuition revenue. As a result, the institution has decreased the number of faculty and supporting personnel (see Table 15), while concurrently increasing the student population and maintaining a health care facility to treat patients on campus.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 9:** LSUHSC-NO SD State Funds and Tuition Since 2008



**Table 15:** Personnel at LSUHSC-NO SD

	2005	2019
Full-Time & Part-Time Faculty	131	102
Staff	192	142
DDS Students	240	280
Advanced Ed Students	90	90
Allied Dental Students	65	81

In addition to state funding and tuition, LSUHSC-NO SD generates revenue through clinical services, grants, and contracts. Though state allocations have decreased, the School has been able to increase its clinical revenue through its clinical residency program, generating nearly \$7

million in the fiscal year 2019. Unlike medical education, for which students primarily acquire their clinical skills in a hospital setting, students at LSUHSC-NO SD participate in a clinical residency program, which allows the School to generate revenue while providing undergraduate and dental residents clinical experience under the strict supervision of clinical faculty. In addition, in FY 2019 the School obtained \$10 million in grant and contract funding for sponsored research and graduate medical education for the Advanced Education hospital-based programs.<sup>11</sup>

#### **IV. Interview and Survey Findings**

To further analyze the need for a school of dentistry in North Louisiana, Board of Regents staff conducted 14 semi-structured interviews among individuals with varying perspectives of the oral health and educational needs in the region. Participants consisted of local health care professionals, dentists, deans of educational institutions in the region, and heads of colleges (see Appendix B). Several themes emerged, including: oral health, dentistry workforce, and education needs.

##### *A. Interview Themes*

###### *1. Oral Health*

During each interview, the oral health of the surrounding area was discussed to frame the conversation concerning the need for a school of dentistry. Each individual interviewed discussed the high need for oral health services in rural communities. One local health care provider commented that there is a “lack of access to care in rural regions,” while another local health care provider discussed the need for oral health education specifically in rural communities.

###### *2. Workforce Needs*

Each participant interviewed expressed the high need for dentists in rural communities, specifically, emphasizing a maldistribution of dentists. Several noted the volume of dentists in major cities such as Shreveport and Monroe, while noting that workforce shortages appear most prevalent in rural communities. Suggested solutions to the high workforce need in rural communities included emphasizing the rural track program, a program created in partnership with Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health with LSUHSC-NO SD to increase the number of dentists practicing in rural areas as well as incentivizing dentists to establish practices that accept Medicaid, particularly in high-need rural communities.

###### *3. Educational Demand*

Among the 14 interviews conducted, six interviewees stated that an additional school of dentistry would not solve the maldistribution of dentists in North Louisiana; four indicated support for an additional school of dentistry; and three did not state a preference. Those in favor of an additional school emphasized the benefit of a dentistry school clinic to provide services for high-need, low-income populations. Those not in favor of an additional school of dentistry emphasized how increasing the number of dentists in North Louisiana would not incentivize service to or ameliorate the need in rural communities. One solution repeated throughout the

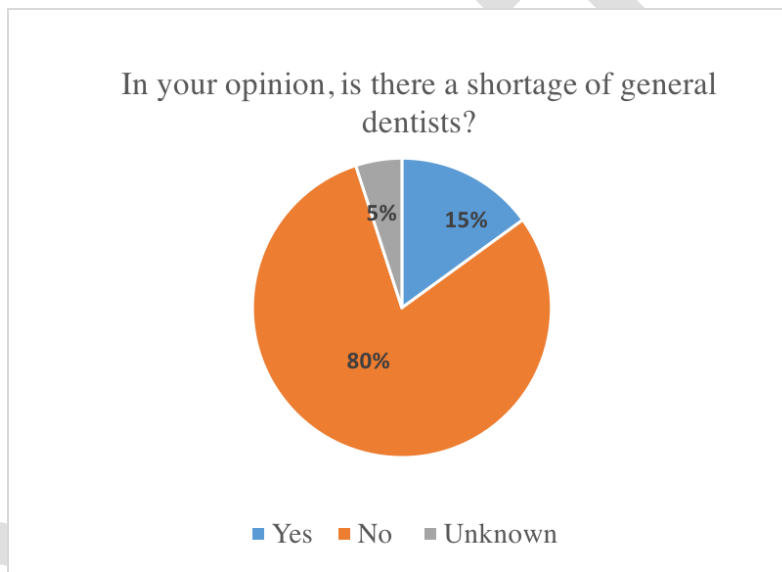


interviews among local healthcare professionals and dentists was to increase residency programs in North Louisiana.

### *B. Workforce Needs Assessment Survey Findings*

In August 2018 the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), in partnership with the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI), conducted a workforce needs assessment survey of 282 dentists throughout Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> With permission from LDH, BOR filtered responses from the 20 North Louisiana parishes in response to the survey question, “In your opinion, is there a shortage of general dentists?”

**Figure 10:** Opinion Survey Results



As shown in Figure 10, participating dentists in North Louisiana do not feel that there is a shortage of dentists. In one interview the respondent stated, “It’s not a shortage issue; it’s a geographic spread issue.” Another responded, “There’s no shortage. There are enough dentists per capita... (or at least a) sufficient number... the worst Louisiana could do is pump out a bunch of dentists that are potentially poor quality like they did in the ‘70s.” Additional comments were made concerning the need for dentists to serve low-income populations. One dentist provided the insight that it is expensive to establish private practices, particularly in rural communities, which results in patients needing to travel to urban areas in order to obtain dentistry services.<sup>2</sup>

### **V. Summary**

An analysis of the oral health needs in North Louisiana and throughout the state, the state’s dental educational landscape, and interview feedback and survey results highlights the following conclusions:

- Oral Health

Preventative dental care in Louisiana appears to be a low priority among many adults. Several factors may attribute to this issue: fear, difficulty of access, and cost of dental care. According to the Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Assessment, limited knowledge (“low dental IQ”) may be an additional barrier to seeking preventative dental care. In addition, the costs for low-income and uninsured individuals create a barrier for access. Medicaid plays an important role in dental care access, but many practices do not accept Medicaid patients.<sup>2</sup>

In North Louisiana there appears to be a demand for additional access to dental services and increased dental education. Though below the state average, health reports suggest a need exists in the region to address untreated decay and minimize the use of dental sealants in six to nine-year old children in that region in 2017-2018.<sup>3</sup>

- Workforce Needs

Urban areas in the state do not appear to have a shortage of dentists. Instead, there is a maldistribution of dentists across the state, particularly in rural communities. This can be attributed to a lack of incentives for dentists to work in rural areas, difficulties of establishing private practices in these communities, and hesitance of dentists to accept Medicaid patients.

Research clearly shows a shortage of rural health care providers in North Louisiana along with other rural parts of the state, suggesting a need for targeted incentives and solutions to specifically address the state’s underserved populations.

- School of Dentistry Needs

Louisiana currently has one school of dentistry, LSUHSC-NO SD. Although LSUHSC-NO SD has seen a decrease in the number of completers of its Doctorate in Dental Surgery, the school increased the class size from 65 students to 75 students in 2018.<sup>11</sup> In the Southern Region of the United States, as defined by the American Dental Education Association, only Arkansas does not have a dental school, while North Carolina, Kentucky and Texas have more than one public dental school.<sup>13</sup> Of the Louisiana residents who attended dental school as first-year students in the 2018-2019 school year, 90% enrolled at LSUHSC-NO SD.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, LSUHSC-NO SD serves as the primary institution for Louisiana residents to attend dental school.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Senate Resolution Number 190 of the 2019 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature (SR 190) charged the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) to “study how the state can optimally meet the oral health needs of our citizens through the establishment of a school of dentistry in northern Louisiana.” In response to this request, BOR staff examined the oral health, dental workforce and educational needs present in North Louisiana. Based on careful research, analysis and interviews with individuals throughout the state, the Board of Regents finds a clear need for increased access to dental care but does not find sufficient evidence to indicate that the establishment of a new school of dentistry in North Louisiana is the best immediate solution.

As previously stated, oral health is cited as a “critical challenge for both adults and children, affecting their overall health and quality of life and is essential for health development and aging.”<sup>2</sup> According to the American Dental Association (ADA), three elements must be adequately addressed to improve access to dental care: 1) demand for dental care, 2) the dental workforce, and 3) the economic environment. The ADA notes that all three elements must be addressed; resolving one alone will not solve the oral health issues facing our state.<sup>2</sup>

The recommendations presented herein are therefore offered in consideration of these individual elements and the need to balance all three. In order to meet the oral health needs of our citizens, the BOR presents the following recommendations.

### **Recommendation 1: Increase Access to Dental Care**

The Board of Regents finds a real opportunity exists within the LSU System to better serve the health care needs, including the dental health needs, of rural communities across the state. LSU should develop clinical offerings in North Louisiana in partnership with LSUHSC-NO SD and LSUHSC-Shreveport as well as ULM and SUSLA’s dental hygiene programs to expand access through a level of collaboration that prioritizes the health care needs of the region. Effectively meeting the needs of our citizens requires considerations of “turf” to be set aside in favor of a full commitment to partnership and progress.

LSU should facilitate the review of the established **academic and clinical collaboration agreement** to include dental clinics and residencies and set a timetable and implementation plan to resolve barriers to regional partnerships. Additional private healthcare providers should be engaged in confecting this overall plan of action so that all resources can be leveraged for success.

### **Recommendation 2: Target Incentives to Increase Rural Providers**

In Louisiana 84% of the state falls within a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA);<sup>2</sup> therefore addressing the needs of underserved populations must be a significant priority. Providing additional funding to the **Rural Scholars Track Program (RST) can help**. Established in 2016, in cooperation with LSUHSC-NO SD, Area Health Education Center, Southeast Louisiana (SELAHEC) and the Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health (BPCRH) the RST program was designed to increase the number of dentists who practice in rural areas. RST recipients receive tuition waivers when they commit to practicing in rural areas of Louisiana upon graduation. Currently, LSUHSC-NO SD has two student participants in the RST. This is not enough. The state should increase the number of dental students in the program, thus creating a pipeline of dentists working in health professional shortage areas specific to North Louisiana and other high-need rural areas across the state.

### **Recommendation 3: Understand the Health Care Environment and Address Immediate and Long-Term Needs Through Consolidated Efforts**

It is important to understand the overall health care environment in the state. Again we see a significant opportunity for the LSU System to leverage its two geographically unique medical schools to collaborate in developing statewide plans that address overall healthcare workforce

demands of Louisiana, with specific attention to the needs of rural communities. The opportunity for them to partner, as well as to harness the expertise of Pennington Biomedical Center, in designing coordinated solutions would be invaluable to our state as we focus on ensuring that Louisiana Prospers. Specifically addressing the need for North Louisiana dental residency programs, increased class sizes, and new public-private partnerships would set a course to resolve a serious health crisis in Louisiana and capitalize on both immediate and long-term opportunities for growth and success.

The Board of Regents is committed to advocating for improved access to dental health care across the state and looks forward to working in tandem with the LSU System in bringing forth effective solutions that meet the needs of the citizens of Louisiana.

DRAFT

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**Appendix A:**

2019 Regular Session

**ENROLLED**

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 190

BY SENATORS PEACOCK AND TARVER

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents to study how the state can optimally meet the oral health needs of our citizens through the establishment of a school of dentistry in northern Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(2) of the Constitution of Louisiana provides, relative to public institutions of postsecondary education, that it is a power, duty, and responsibility of the Board of Regents to approve a proposed degree program, department of instruction, division, or similar subdivision; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(3)(a) of the Constitution further provides that it is a power, duty, and responsibility of the board to study the need for and feasibility of creating a new institution of postsecondary education, which includes establishing a branch of such an institution; and

WHEREAS, there is great interest in establishing a dental school in northern Louisiana in order to meet the educational needs of students, the economic and workforce development needs of the region, and the healthcare needs of the area's citizens; and

WHEREAS, oral health is an important component of overall health for the citizens of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana lags behind the rest of the country in key indicators in oral health; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Louisiana had only forty-eight dentists per one hundred thousand population, which is well below the national average of sixty-one dentists per one hundred thousand population; and

WHEREAS, the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has designated fifty-nine of our sixty-four parishes, and all of the parishes in northern Louisiana, as health professions shortage areas for dental health; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana citizens in rural areas or who have low income have been shown to have even more significant challenges in accessing dental care; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Louisiana Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health received a HRSA grant to support the Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Expansion Program which set a goal to establish a rural track dental scholars program; and

WHEREAS, the northern region of the state lacks a dental school; and

WHEREAS, a dental school in north Louisiana would greatly expand access to dental care to an area of the state that is underserved.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents to study how the state can optimally meet the oral health needs of our citizens through the establishment of a school of dentistry in northern Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education by not later than ninety days prior to the beginning of the 2020 Regular Session of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairman of the Board of Regents and the commissioner of higher education.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE



## Appendix B:

### Participants in Board of Regents Semi-Structured Interviews

<p><b>Dr. Robert E. Barsley, DDS, JD</b> Professor and Director, Oral Health Services LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry</p>	<p><b>Dr. Henry Gremillion, DDS, MAGD</b> Dean and Professor LSU Health New Orleans School of Dentistry</p>
<p><b>Dr. G.E. Ghali, DDS, MD, FACS, FRCS (Ed)</b> Chancellor LSU Health Shreveport</p>	<p><b>W. Jeff Reynolds</b> Vice Chancellor for Administration &amp; Finance LSU Health Shreveport</p>
<p><b>Katie Parnell, CEO</b> Morehouse Community Medical Centers, Inc.</p>	<p><b>MeChaune Butler, MPA</b> Oral Health Promotion Manager Well-Ahead Louisiana</p>
<p><b>Georgena Desrosier, MPH</b> Oral Health Promotion Coordinator Well-Ahead Louisiana</p>	<p><b>Ward Blackwell</b> Executive Director Louisiana Dental Association</p>
<p><b>Kimberly Brent, MPA</b> Division Manager for Community Clinical Linkages Well-Ahead Louisiana</p>	<p><b>Chris Vidrine</b> Assistant Vice President of Governmental Relations &amp; Public Policy Louisiana State University</p>
<p><b>Liz Sumrall</b> Director of Health Care Policy Louisiana State University</p>	<p><b>Jordan Anderson, RDH, BS, MDH</b> Associate Professor University of Louisiana at Monroe</p>
<p><b>Sharon Chaney</b> Assistant Professor &amp; Director of Dental Hygiene School of Allied Health University of Louisiana at Monroe</p>	<p><b>Lynne Eatman</b> Interim Director of Dental Hygiene Southern University Shreveport</p>
<p><b>Jo Ann Brown</b> Dean of Allied Health Southern University Shreveport</p>	<p><b>Dr. Blaine Calahan, President</b> Northwest Louisiana Dental Association</p>
<p><b>Dr. Michael Haydel, Former President</b> Northwest Louisiana Dental Association</p>	<p><b>Barrie Black</b> Program Manager, Healthy Communities Louisiana Public Health Institute</p>