



Parish Health Profiles

A Tool For Community Health Planning

St. Landry Parish

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PUBLIC HEALTH IN AMERICA

Promoting Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health

- *Prevents epidemics and the spread of disease;*
- *Protects against environmental hazards;*
- *Prevents injuries;*
- *Promotes and encourages healthy behaviors;*
- *Responds to disasters and assists communities in recovery; and*
- *Assures the quality and accessibility of health services.*

Essential Public Health Services

- *Monitor health status to identify community problems;*
- *Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community;*
- *Inform, educate and empower people about health issues;*
- *Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems;*
- *Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts;*
- *Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety;*
- *Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable;*
- *Assure an expert public health and personal health care workforce;*
- *Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services; and*
- *Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.*

Environmental Health



"Our communities are only as healthy as the air our children breathe, the water they drink, the earth they will inherit . . . We have always found a way to clean the environment and grow the economy at the same time. And we'll do it again."

President William Jefferson Clinton, 1998

The environment is the air, water, land, and structures around us that make up communities. A healthy environment can add to the quality of life for individuals and communities. When the environment is safe, people are more likely to be free from diseases. Protecting Louisiana citizens against disease-causing contaminants in food, water, air, and soil requires collaboration among numerous entities. Government agencies, private businesses, environmental organizations, and private citizens all work to maintain a clean and safe environment. Private and public organizations inform the public about the potentially dangerous effects of some chemicals on people's health. Regulations govern how much of which chemicals can be released and disposed. Having safe food and water and maintaining healthy homes and businesses positively impact health and quality of life.

The Center for Environmental Health Services (CEHS), within the Office of Public Health (OPH) protects the public's health by enforcing the Louisiana State Sanitary Code. The activities of CEHS sanitarians and engineers reduce the likelihood of disease transmission. Water systems are monitored to assure that water is safe to drink. Restaurants, molluscan shellfish growing areas, food and drug manufacturers, and the milk and dairy industry are monitored to assure that Louisiana products are safe for the public. In addition, the CEHS Section of Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology (SEET) monitors possible human exposures to, and health risks from, events related to chemical agents in the environment. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) monitors air and water quality, chemical spills, toxic releases and efforts to reuse contaminated soil or recycled products.

DID YOU KNOW?

In fiscal year 2003-2004, the CEHS conducted 10,589 inspections of public accommodations and private premises in response to citizen complaints of unsanitary conditions.¹ For information on the State Sanitary Code, contact

Office of Public Health

Sanitarian Services at 225-763-5553.

Louisiana has made great strides in reducing its toxic chemical releases. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), in 1999 Louisiana ranked 12th in the nation for total releases by state, original and new industries.² This represents a substantial improvement over the traditional 1st or 2nd ranking of previous years. However, communities are still faced with many concerns about the environment. Regardless of this progress, people living in Louisiana have expressed fears that, over time, pollution will harm their health.³

To address these concerns and to better educate the community, this chapter covers:

- Pesticides
- Fish/shellfish consumption advisories
- Swimming advisories
- Coastal beach advisories
- Protecting shellfish consumers
- Safe drinking water
- Hazardous waste
- Toxic releases
- Indoor air quality
- Ozone non-attainment
- Recycling programs
- Future Environmental Surveillance Trends