



We Believe in a **Healthy Louisiana**

HEALTHY STATE 5-YEAR IMPACT REPORT



Lasting change happens when
people and organizations align
around a common purpose—
driving collective action to
improve health and strengthen
communities for generations.





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a Healthier Louisiana

Moving forward, together

Recognizing that health happens beyond hospitals, in 2020, Ochsner invited leaders from healthcare, education, business and policy to partner as Healthy State and guide its direction.

HEALTHY STATE FOUNDING MEMBERS

The founding organizations of Healthy State provided the insight, resources and leadership that shaped our priorities and accelerated early progress — laying the foundation for meaningful impact.

Over five years, the formed Healthy State Alliance grew to include more than 35 organizations working toward a shared goal: helping people live healthier lives across Louisiana. Using data and evidence-based solutions, partners focused on **six priority areas: cancer and chronic conditions, workforce and education, wellness and obesity, smoking cessation, broadband access and food security.**

Together, these partnerships show that lasting progress happens when organizations, communities and leaders work side by side to improve health across Louisiana.

MEASURABLE RESULTS

The Alliance achieved measurable results. When organizations work together and focus on proven solutions, real progress is possible — even in communities facing long-standing challenges.



HEALTHY STATE: 5 YEARS OF PROGRESS

↓ 32%

Reduction in number of adult smokers

93%

Households now have broadband access

↑ 16%

Improvement in food security to almost 84% secure households

↑ 24%

Increase in per capita income

(+\$6,778 — from \$28,600 to \$35,440)

↑ 14 places

Improvement in national colorectal cancer screening rankings

(27th to 13th)

↑ 17%

Increase in K-3 students reading on or above grade level over the 2024-2025 school year

↑ 37%

Increase in number of adults who exercise

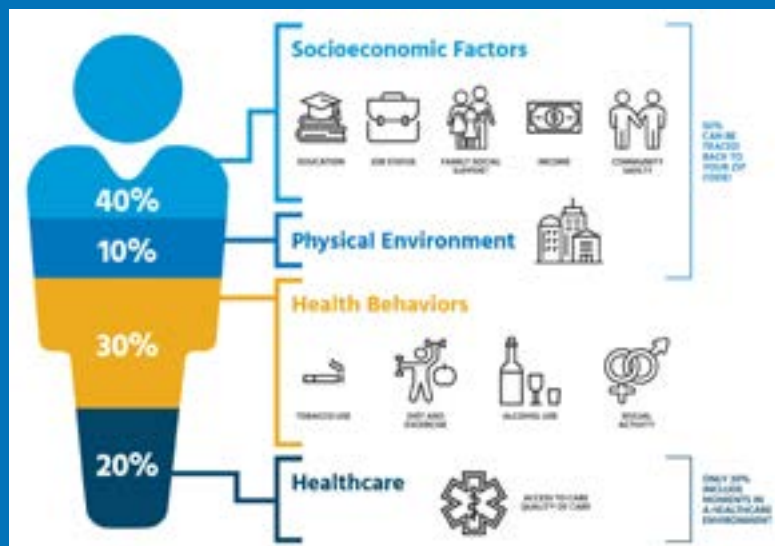
These improvements in America's Health Rankings are more than just numbers. **These are real changes in the health and lives of our communities.**



The Healthy State Priorities

Because 80% of health outcomes are tied to factors outside the healthcare environment, Healthy State focused on cancer and chronic conditions, workforce and education, wellness and obesity, smoking cessation, broadband access and food security, representing some of the most significant drivers of health in Louisiana. These focus areas align with key indicators in America's Health Rankings (AHR). Together, they reflect opportunities where collective action can create meaningful, lasting impact.

More than improving systems, these priorities are about improving everyday life for people and families across Louisiana.



SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH

Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)





SMOKING CESSATION

GOAL: End smoking by changing behavior, advancing policy and expanding access to comprehensive smoking cessation services.

REASON: Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in Louisiana (Centers for Disease Control (CDC)). In 2020, almost 22% of adults in Louisiana and 14% in the United States continued to smoke. (AHR).

IMPACT: From 2020 to 2025, Louisiana reduced its adult smoking rate to 15%.

↓ 32%

Reduction in number
of adult smokers

COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION AND YOUTH PREVENTION

Community education and youth prevention programs support lasting behavior change.

Through targeted outreach informed by community data and evidence-based interventions, Ochsner Health and partners reached more than 11,000 Louisiana residents through 54 community education events focused on cancer and tobacco prevention. Ochsner Health, Chevron, the Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) Office of Behavioral Health, the Louisiana Cancer Research Center (LCRC) and the Louisiana Public Health Institute's Tobacco-Free Living (TFL) program also partnered with schools across the state to provide vaping education programs that help protect the next generation from nicotine addiction.

POLICY CHANGE:

- **Access to Counseling and Medications:** Through Healthy State's partnership with the Cancer Advocacy Group of Louisiana (CAGLA), the Louisiana Legislature strengthened access and affordability to cessation support by authorizing six months of counseling and medications with no copays for all members of commercial and Medicaid health plans.
- **Municipal Smoke-Free Ordinance Expansion:** Healthy State and Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living, a program of the Louisiana Cancer Research Center and the Louisiana Public Health Institute, worked together to advance community-driven smoke-free ordinances that reduce secondhand smoke exposure. By partnering with state and local leaders, six municipalities — Ringgold, Farmerville, Campti, New Iberia, Ball and Dodson — adopted new ordinances since 2020, bringing the statewide total to 36. These policies protect residents, especially bar and casino workers, from toxic secondhand smoke.
- **Tax Policy:** Studies show* raising Louisiana's cigarette tax only 42¢ (from \$1.08 to \$1.50) per pack would generate nearly \$166 million in new revenue in the first year, delivering \$321 million in long-term healthcare savings and reduce smoking among more than 20,000 people statewide. While the cigarette tax has not yet changed, the campaign **secured a major policy win by tripling the vape excise tax** and created new regulation through the VAPE Directory.

Tobacco taxes
are the single
most effective
strategy
to reduce
smoking.

THE PATH FORWARD: To sustain progress, the state must expand access to evidence-based cessation services, raise cigarette excise taxes and expand smoke-free air policies. Paired with school and community-based prevention, these measures help stop initiation and support long-term quitting.

*"A Significant Cigarette Tax Rate Increase in Louisiana Would Produce a Large Increase in State Tobacco Tax Revenues" by Frank J. Chaloupka, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago, Founder, Tobacconomics, Oct 2024



FOOD SECURITY

↑ 16%

Improvement in food security
to almost 84% secure
households

GOAL: Reduce food insecurity rates by connecting people to benefit programs and food support systems, providing education on healthy foods, strengthening existing initiatives and establishing new partnerships.

REASON: Food insecurity has broad effects on health due to the mental and physical stress it places on the body and is associated with anemia, asthma, depression and anxiety, cognitive and behavioral problems and higher healthcare-related costs. In 2020, 18% of Louisiana residents experienced food insecurity compared to 12% nationally (Feeding America). Children are especially vulnerable, with 25% of children experiencing food insecurity (AHR).

IMPACT: From 2020 to 2025, we saw a 16% improvement in food security to almost 84% secure households.

STATEWIDE ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT

Regular access to nutritious meals prevents chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes, supports mental well-being, lowers healthcare costs, improves child development, helps seniors remain independent and influences lifetime earning potential. Reliable access to food strengthens families, communities and the workforce, making it essential for health and economic resilience.

To address these challenges, Healthy State partnered with Feeding Louisiana, Second Harvest Food Bank and the Louisiana Anti-Hunger Coalition to develop a statewide roadmap for hunger solutions, aligning and coordinating efforts across community resources.

COALITION BUILDING

Guided by the Louisiana Roadmap to End Hunger and Healthy State data, Baton Rouge partners from nonprofits, healthcare and government agencies formed the Alliance Against Hunger. The coalition co-developed policy recommendations, funding applications and initiatives such as mobile food pantries and Food is Medicine programs. This work sparked large strategic federal investments in statewide programs that redefine healthcare providers as partners in nutritious food access initiatives like Food FARMacies.

FOOD ACCESS SOLUTIONS

The Healthy State Alliance members expanded food distribution through partnerships to locations where families frequent, including clinics, hospitals and college campuses, pairing access with supportive services for chronic disease management.

- **Second Harvest Partnership:**
 - In the rural Bayou region, partnerships with Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center, local government and community organizations launched a summer meal site for children.
 - In the Greater New Orleans and Acadiana areas, access is increased through food pantries, food box distribution, summer meal sites and mobile grocery markets stocked with nutritious foods.
- **LSU AgCenter Partnership:** Collaborations with LSU AgCenter expanded capacity for nutrition and physical activity classes.
- **Local Government Partnership:** In a food-limited area, a farmers' market hosts local farmers, nutrition experts, SNAP enrollment services and health screenings.
- **Louisiana Anti-Hunger Coalition:** The Louisiana Anti-Hunger Coalition helped expand free school meals to nearly 14,000 additional students.



More families are gaining access to healthy food where they live, work and raise their children.

- **Higher Education Food Security:** Recognizing 30% of college students are food insecure, Healthy State worked with the Louisiana Board of Regents to support 35 campuses in earning “Hunger-Free Campus” designations recognizing their student-led anti-hunger initiatives like food pantries.
- **SNAP Enrollment Innovation:** Healthy State facilitated co-location of DCFS SNAP enrollment coordinators in high-volume Ochsner Health sites and supported awareness for the Elderly Simplified Application Project (E-SAP) to make SNAP benefits easier for older adults to access. Feeding Louisiana and DCFS also developed a mobile SNAP app to streamline food access.
- **Food is Medicine:** Healthy State launched a Food is Medicine pilot with Market Umbrella, delivering groceries, including fresh produce, to Medicaid members who are patients with chronic conditions at Ochsner Health locations in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

THE PATH FORWARD: Through partnership, coalition and Alliance members will continue to implement and study Food is Medicine models, expand summer feeding sites, increase SNAP enrollment and increase access to healthy foods through mobile markets in high-need areas. **Each initiative integrates nutrition and food access to reduce food insecurity and improve health outcomes —making it easier for families to access healthy food and build habits that support long-term wellness.**





CANCER AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

GOAL: Save lives through access to lung, colorectal and breast cancer screenings; expand detection and treatment of chronic conditions.

REASON: Nearly two-thirds of preventable premature death in Louisiana is due to cancer and uncontrolled chronic conditions. In 2020, the rate of multiple chronic conditions in Louisiana was 12%. The U.S. rate was nearly 10% (AHR).

IMPACT: Louisiana is achieving significant gains in cancer prevention and early detection. The state's colorectal cancer screening rank improved from 27th in 2020 to 13th in 2025 — a 14-place rise — and statewide screening increased from about 69% to 73% during the same period. According to the American Lung Association, lung cancer incidence decreased by 6% over the last five years, and enhanced data systems and healthcare infrastructure now support more lung cancer screenings — the leading cause of cancer death — than ever before. As of 2025, Louisiana is outpacing the national average with a 78% breast cancer screening rate. Together, these accomplishments demonstrate the power of coordinated action, strengthened data systems, and shared commitment to improving health outcomes for communities across the state.

↑ 14
places

Improvement in national
colorectal cancer screening
rankings

PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS: ADVANCING CHRONIC DISEASE AND CANCER SCREENING IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana is taking decisive action to reduce premature deaths from heart disease and cancer, the state's leading causes of early mortality. Through clinical care, policy reform, data systems, and community initiatives, Louisiana is creating a coordinated, life-saving approach.

- In 2023, **Healthy State launched the Quality Action Team**, a coalition of senior leaders from healthcare providers, insurers, the Louisiana Department of Health and community institutions. The team focused on proven interventions such as controlling hypertension and diabetes and early detection of lung, breast and colorectal cancers, while prioritizing data quality and screening improvements.
- **Expanded access to integrated primary care** based in communities is critical to long term chronic disease management. Recognizing the cornerstone role that community health centers play, Humana, a Healthy State Alliance member, invested over \$20 million in the expansion of community health centers.
- Since 2023, access to primary care has increased and the Louisiana Quality Dashboard shows a **12-point improvement statewide in hypertension control** among Medicaid participants from 2020 to 2023. Progress reflects public awareness campaigns, updated provider record systems, data-driven strategies and community-informed priorities.

This spirit of working together and shared incentives is driving advancements in cancer screenings, particularly for lung and colorectal cancer.

ADVANCING HEALTHCARE ACCESS THROUGH POLICY AND FUNDING

Over five years, the Alliance has driven policy and funding changes that expand care access, improve outcomes, and better connect clinical services with community supports.

As a result, Louisianans have secured affordable access to essential medications and required insurance coverage for doula services, supporting healthier pregnancies and better birth outcomes. The Louisiana Department of Health expanded Medicaid to include reimbursement for providers in supervised clinical training, increasing statewide capacity and ultimately keeping more providers employed in the state. Further, Louisiana approved reimbursement for Community Health Workers in FQHCs and RHCs, extending outreach and care coordination to over 5,000 patients. Additional

More people are getting screened earlier—especially for lung and colorectal cancer.

initiatives included creating behavioral health crisis care in seven of nine regions and expanding tobacco cessation coverage. Together, these system-level advances are critical wins that address longstanding gaps in care, improve health outcomes and build a foundation for higher-quality, coordinated healthcare statewide.

THE PATH FORWARD: Building on Healthy State's momentum, the **Chronic Disease Collective** — co-chaired by Ochsner Health and the Louisiana Department of Health — brings together partners to share knowledge, strengthen accountability and expand impactful interventions for chronic disease statewide. The Collective includes Alliance members and operates through four work groups: Quality Improvement, Health Access, Health Policy and Advocacy and Education and Awareness.

Louisiana has made significant progress in chronic disease management and cancer prevention, but closing remaining gaps requires a sustained, coordinated effort. The **Louisiana Department of Health's Chronic Disease Collective** is driving next steps by refining data systems, aligning quality strategies, and expanding initiatives to improve outcomes for obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Taking Aim at Cancer in Louisiana, The Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, New Orleans Cancer Control Program and its Louisiana Colorectal Cancer Roundtable continue advancing statewide cancer-screening priorities by convening health systems, community organizations and policy leaders. Through sustained collaboration, enhanced data infrastructure, stronger outreach strategies and aligned policies, these initiatives expand cancer screening to reach all regions and populations.

Combined, these collaboratives sustain a unified, system-level approach that improves health outcomes, strengthens early detection and delivers high-quality care.





WELLNESS & OBESITY

↑ 37%

Increase in number
of adults who exercise

GOAL: Reduce obesity by increasing access to nutritious foods, providing education on healthy eating and expanding access to safe physical activity in underserved communities.

REASON: Adults who have obesity are more likely to have decreased quality of life and increased risk of developing serious health conditions. In 2020, 36% of adults in Louisiana were obese compared with 32% for the nation. At the same time, 68% of adults were physically active in Louisiana with about 74% of adults who were physically active in the nation.

IMPACT: From 2020 to 2025, the percentage of adults who exercise improved 7.2 percentage points, surpassing the 10-year target.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Louisiana chose its obesity reduction strategies for their strong evidence-based and proven ability to improve health outcomes by promoting physical activity, healthy eating and better management of obesity-related chronic conditions. Clinical interventions are most effective for weight loss, while community programs, nutrition access, and awareness campaigns foster environments that support healthy behaviors.

LSU AgCenter's Healthy Communities/High Obesity Program, established in 2018, has been a key Healthy State partner. The program has driven policy, systems and environmental changes in rural parishes with obesity rates over 40% and created a replicable model for improving farmers' markets and expanding SNAP acceptance and enrollment. Building on this model, Healthy State is scaling nutrition, physical activity and food access infrastructure in rural communities.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Pennington Biomedical Research Center's Obesity, USA public health campaign, promoted by Healthy State, elevated obesity awareness through a national advocacy platform supported by \$16 million in donated media. Its **Greaux Healthy** initiative complements this effort by delivering practical, community-based programs and tools that encourage healthy eating and active living for children to reduce obesity and chronic disease risk across Louisiana.

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Louisiana's research and academic initiatives support evidence-based approaches to obesity prevention and healthy lifestyle promotion. The **LSU School of Kinesiology** secured NIH funding for **ProudMe**, a school-based adolescent obesity prevention program that integrates education, physical activity and nutrition strategies. Programs like ProudMe use research and academic expertise to deliver data-driven models for early obesity prevention and scalable best practices for schools and communities.

THE PATH FORWARD: Louisiana has made meaningful progress in reducing obesity but continued coordinated action is needed to expand access to nutritious foods, safe opportunities for physical activity and effective clinical support. Building on early gains like increased adult exercise, partners must strengthen systems that make healthy choices easier and more accessible.

Programs like **LSU AgCenter's Healthy Communities** and expanded rural food access infrastructure offer scalable models to reach more parishes. Continued investment in community-centered programs and resources like Greaux Healthy, along with expanded training hubs, will help create environments that support lasting behavior change and improve quality of life. These efforts are reinforced by the **Louisiana Department of Health's Chronic Disease Collective**,

Expanding access to nutritious foods and physical activity is key to a healthy Louisiana.

which prioritizes obesity, aligns cross-sector strategies, addresses health policy issues and coordinates statewide interventions.

Through these collaborative initiatives, Louisiana is advancing coordinated, scalable efforts to expand nutrition and physical activity access, improve quality of life, and reduce obesity-related risks statewide. Sustaining momentum will require initiatives that connect nutrition access, clinical obesity care and public awareness. The **Eat Fit** program at Ochsner Health will continue shaping a healthier food culture through education, labeling policies and partnerships with employers, restaurants and markets.

Clinical tools such as the **digital weight management program** at Ochsner Health, integrated coaching and appropriate medication support will remain central to helping individuals manage obesity as a chronic condition.

Large public health campaigns like Pennington Biomedical's Obecity, USA and emerging research such as LSU's NIH-funded ProudMe adolescent intervention demonstrate how academic and media partnerships can shift norms and reach new populations. By aligning the Chronic Disease Collective's leadership with these multi-sector efforts, Louisiana will continue progressing toward healthier communities and measurable reductions in obesity.





WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

↑ 24%

Increase in
per capita income

GOAL: Reduce income inequality and economic hardship and improve high school graduation rates by advancing careers and career pathways into high-wage, high-demand jobs.

REASON: Those with lower incomes and less educational attainment have poorer health outcomes than those with higher educational attainment and higher incomes. In 2020, the per capita income was about \$28,600 compared with \$36,672 for the nation.

IMPACT: From 2020 to 2025, Louisiana's per capita income increased 24% from \$28,600 to \$35,440 (+\$6,778). High school completion rates for those under age 25 improved by 2%, from 86% in 2020 to about 88% in 2025.

↑ 17%

Increase in K-3 students
reading at or above grade
level over the 2024-2025
school year

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

Strengthening Louisiana's health begins with expanding economic opportunity. Workforce development and education create pathways to high-wage careers that support healthier lives, greater economic mobility and stronger communities.

Louisiana's recent investments reflect a shared commitment to address three critical challenges: economic immobility, outmigration of talent, and healthcare workforce shortages. Several major investments contributed to increased incomes. **The state has committed more than \$921 million to drive job growth, talent development and economic resilience.** Key allocations include \$410 million through the HERO Fund to expand the healthcare workforce, \$55 million dedicated to strengthening the healthcare talent pipeline, and \$90 million for a translational research capital investment at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS: BUILDING CAREER READINESS

The Louisiana Department of Health's new provisional licensure program enabled over 4,000 mental health professionals to join Louisiana's workforce while completing their practical training, effectively increasing the available workforce and reducing a barrier to entry. The legislature prioritized graduation and career readiness by expanding dual enrollment, technical education, and student support programs, and broadened the definition of corporate partnerships with charter schools, allowing more businesses to support student career pathways.

PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS: ADVANCING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

Through partnerships among healthcare providers, educational institutions, workforce organizations and state leaders, Louisiana expanded pathways into high-demand healthcare careers and helped address critical workforce shortages.

- Through strategic public-private partnerships promoted by Healthy State, Ochsner Health partnered with the **University of Louisiana at Lafayette** to expand nurse training opportunities and worked with the **Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS)** to grow nursing and allied health programs at **Delgado Community College** and **Fletcher Technical Community College**.
- The **Ochsner Nurse Scholars Program** accepted 614 students, with 90 now employed at Ochsner, helping strengthen Louisiana's nursing workforce and create new pathways into healthcare careers.
- **Xavier University of Louisiana** launched several new graduate degree programs, including genomics and health informatics, while Xavier's physician assistant program graduated 32 healthcare professionals.

When
people
can learn
new skills
while they
work, more
families
can thrive.

- To prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals and address population-specific workforce needs, Healthy State supported initiatives such as the **LSU–Ochsner Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program** and the **Ochsner Health–NextOp Veteran Workforce Milestone Program**. The veteran workforce initiative exceeded expectations, onboarding 307 veterans, more than three times its original goal.

CAREER PATHWAYS AND GRADUATION

Education is a powerful predictor of health. Higher levels of educational attainment are linked to better employment opportunities, greater access to health benefits and improved long-term well-being. By investing in postsecondary credentials, Louisiana is addressing a key social driver of health that can reduce chronic disease, increase life expectancy and strengthen economic mobility. Through collaboration among education, workforce and healthcare partners, the state expanded pathways from high school through postsecondary education to grow the healthcare workforce and create opportunities for future generations.

Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine (XOCOM), slated to become the only HBCU college of medicine in the Gulf South, secured \$3 million in legislative support for planning.

Since the Louisiana Board of Regents adopted its 2020 Master Plan with an ambitious goal of having 60% of working-age adults (ages 25–64) hold a degree or high-value credential by 2030, Louisiana has shown measurable progress. The Board of Regents reports indicate a 5.2 percentage-point increase in adults holding degrees or credentials of value since the plan began. In 2025, a record number of over 80,000 Louisiana residents completed credentials, nearing the 2030 annual target of 85,000. **These gains demonstrate that boosting postsecondary credential attainment advances Louisiana’s health goals by fostering stability, expanding opportunity and enabling longer, healthier lives.**

WORKFORCE TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

Statewide training capacity was strengthened through the broadband certification initiative and the MJ Foster Promise Fund, which provided \$10.5 million in student aid.

FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENTS

Graduating on time leads to stable jobs and economic security, driving healthier behaviors and longer lives. Healthy State Alliance members supported legislation expanding the Steve Carter Literacy Program to include math support and annual K-3 numeracy assessments. The state also implemented a phonics-based literacy plan aligned with the Science of Reading and established high-dosage tutoring for students below grade level.

WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPANSION

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education expanded work-based learning in 2024 by broadening the definition to include internships, apprenticeships and structured on-the-job training. Paid internships are now required, and these programs will carry higher accountability scores beginning in 2026. Work-based learning allows students to earn income while gaining skills, graduate with credentials and enter the workforce sooner.

THE PATH FORWARD: To help Louisiana thrive, residents need work-based learning, earn-as-you-learn programs and access to paid internships and apprenticeships providing financial stability and potential economic mobility. This work requires funding that strengthens literacy and career readiness, trains local talent and removes unnecessary entry barriers. Driving economic growth through high-wage, high-demand jobs strengthens communities and curb talent outmigration.

READING PROFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT

The percentage of K–3 students reading on or above grade level increased by 17 percentage points over the 2024–2025 school year overall, rising from about 47% at the beginning of the year to 64% at the end of the year. (Louisiana Department of Education)

GROWTH BY GRADE (2024–2025):

- Kindergarten: 28% → 61% (+33 points)
- Grade 1: 50% → 69% (+19 points)
- Grade 2: 54% → 65% (+11 points)
- Grade 3: 54% → 62% (+8 points)



BROADBAND

93%

Households now have
broadband access

GOAL: Increase households with high-speed internet access and utilization of digital and telehealth medicine programs.

REASON: Broadband is a “super social determinant of health” because connectivity is critical to accessing other support programs including digital health services/telehealth, virtual learning, benefit sign-up and more. In 2020, Louisiana (82% coverage) lagged the nation (88% coverage) in the number of households with high-speed internet access with over 400,000 households still lacking access. (AHR)

IMPACT: Broadband reached more than 80,000 additional homes, with almost 93% of Louisiana households having broadband access in 2025.

FEDERAL FUNDING CAPTURE

During COVID-19, we saw how lack of internet access widened health gaps and stunted educational growth. This prompted federal investment to expand connectivity.

With Healthy State’s data, evidence and recommendations, **ConnectLA led the successful capture of over \$1.5 billion in federal Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding, making Louisiana one of the top 10 states for federal broadband infrastructure investment.** Healthy State played a critical role by participating in statewide workgroups, identifying coverage gaps and contributing a community health perspective to Louisiana’s broadband roadmap — highlighting how expanded access can improve health outcomes across the state.

HEALTHCARE INTEGRATION PLANNING

Healthy State submitted a comprehensive Broadband and Access to Healthcare Plan to ConnectLA, outlining strategies to expand access to screenings, primary care and urgent care by leveraging telehealth and digital medicine. The plan emphasized the importance of reliable broadband connectivity and affordable devices and services in improving population health outcomes. Additionally, Healthy State participated in public comment processes for ConnectLA’s Digital Health Plan, 5-Year Action Plan and BEAD Volume 2 — bringing forward a community health lens to guide investments in healthcare access infrastructure.

COMMUNITY ANCHOR INSTITUTION MAPPING

Led by ConnectLA, the Healthy State Alliance identified connectivity gaps at schools, libraries, clinics, hospitals and colleges that serve as Community Anchor Institutions — key hubs for essential services and digital access. These gaps limit opportunities for telehealth, remote learning, workforce training and public safety innovation. By mapping these sites, Healthy State supported BEAD eligibility and prioritized community healthcare in Louisiana’s broadband buildout.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ALIGNMENT

ConnectLA and Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), both members of the Healthy State Alliance, aligned broadband expansion with workforce development, supporting a **\$10 million investment to train and certify 7,000 broadband technicians** to support the new infrastructure and bring more high-wage jobs to the area.

THE PATH FORWARD: Beyond infrastructure, **ConnectLA BEAD programmatic federal funds are intended to expand telehealth, digital literacy programs and outreach to rural communities.** Louisiana must ensure affordable devices and services, along with high-speed internet — especially now that the Affordable Connectivity Program has ended.

COMMUNITY IMPACT SPOTLIGHT:

Building Louisiana's Broadband Roadmap Together

A defining strength of Louisiana's broadband strategy has been its commitment to inclusive, community-driven planning. Through a strategic partnership with the Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center at the University of Louisiana Lafayette (Blanco Center), ConnectLA ensured that the voices of residents, community organizations, educators, healthcare providers, businesses and local leaders helped shape the state's digital connectivity roadmap. The Blanco Center's expertise in research, public policy and stakeholder engagement provided a strong foundation for designing a planning process that was both data-informed and community-centered.

Over a two-year period, ConnectLA conducted outreach across nearly 90 municipalities to better understand local conditions, connectivity gaps and barriers to broadband adoption. To deepen engagement, ConnectLA and the Blanco Center partnered with the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Louisiana Association of Planning and Development Districts to convene eight regional meetings and 32 focus groups involving 259 participants from across the state. These conversations generated valuable insights on broadband availability, affordability, digital literacy, technology adoption and the unique needs of Louisiana communities.

The partnership extended beyond traditional public meetings. Higher education institutions, planning commissions, libraries, tribal leaders, economic development organizations and community-based groups contributed perspectives that strengthened the planning process and ensured all community voices were represented in the plan. Through ongoing engagement and public comment opportunities, stakeholders helped identify priorities, surface local challenges and inform strategies for long-term success.

This collaborative approach resulted in a Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) roadmap that reflects the realities and aspirations of communities across Louisiana. By combining research, stakeholder participation and cross-sector collaboration, ConnectLA and the Blanco Center created a blueprint for universal, affordable and reliable broadband access. Their work strengthened Louisiana's broadband plan, capturing significant federal funding by demonstrating how meaningful engagement can build trust, improve policy decisions and accelerate progress toward closing the digital divide.



Creating Space to Work Together

Lasting, systemic change in Louisiana requires cross-sector collaboration. Healthy State created that space—convening leaders to share ideas, launch new projects, and build momentum. Through the Healthy State Summit and value-based care forums, the initiative raised community health awareness and inspired broader commitment to a healthier Louisiana. By providing the table, the data and the follow-through, Healthy State demonstrates how focused, coordinated action can drive rapid change.

By engaging healthcare, community, education and policy organizations statewide, Healthy State partnered with Alliance members to address the leading drivers of poor health. The challenge is too big and too important for any single organization to manage alone. Shared effort also builds credibility within the community, signaling shared responsibility and breaking down silos to drive real impact.

Healthy State turned collaboration into action—aligning leaders, advancing solutions and accelerating change across Louisiana.

WHAT MADE THESE FORUMS DIFFERENT

Healthy State's convenings created a collaborative environment where leaders came together to work across organizations and sectors, aligning around shared priorities and solutions. Structured opportunities allowed experts to share perspectives on addressing health challenges while engaging in joint problem-solving. Leaders from multiple health systems, insurance plans, academic institutions and community organizations focused on a shared goal: better health for Louisiana residents. These meetings placed community health outcomes and patients at the center of every discussion.



Eboni Price-Haywood, MD, MPH, MMM, FACP, Ochsner Health with Mary "Toni" Flowers, PhD, DHL, MBA, CCDP, CDM, SEIC, LCMC Health

HEALTHY STATE SUMMIT: “KNOW IT. OWN IT. LIVE IT: WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A THRIVING LOUISIANA”

On October 24, 2024, Ochsner Health hosted the Healthy State Summit at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center, bringing together more than 280 leaders from healthcare, education, business, government and industry. Discussions focused on workforce development, community health, food security and smoking cessation, with breakout sessions highlighting innovative approaches such as digital medicine for maternal health, sustainable agriculture and strategies to strengthen the healthcare workforce. The summit emphasized the importance of multi-sector collaboration, innovative solutions and regional strategies to drive measurable improvements in health outcomes across Louisiana.

HEALTHY STATE CONVENINGS: ADVANCING VALUE-BASED CARE THROUGH COLLABORATION

Healthy State partnered with the American Journal of Managed Care (AJMC) to convene healthcare leaders focused on transforming value-based care into a patient-centered approach that improves outcomes and addresses social determinants of health.

Since 2022, Healthy State has used these convenings to advance its priorities and bring together leaders to address Louisiana’s most pressing health challenges, including chronic disease, obesity and smoking.

Across these convenings, Healthy State highlighted evidence-based strategies and practical programs—from remote management of hypertension and diabetes to nutrition, workforce development and integrated care models—designed to translate innovation into action. Conversations consistently reinforced a shared understanding that health happens outside clinical walls, focusing on how to connect patients to food assistance programs, expand community-based services and strengthen coordination across sectors.

The forums provided a consistent space to align stakeholders, share best practices, and advance scalable solutions. By bringing together health systems, academic institutions, payers and community organizations, Healthy State accelerated the adoption of patient-centered, value-based approaches and strengthened coordination across Louisiana’s healthcare ecosystem.

HEALTHY STATE’S ROLE AS CATALYST AND CONVENER

- Unified key partners with shared goals, actionable data, evidence-based interventions to drive measurable change
- Set bold, measurable targets and ensured transparent, consistent progress reporting to build trust and accountability
- Cleared barriers through policy alignment, expanded coverage and practical tools to drive clarity and focus
- Amplified local expertise by encouraging partners to share their perspective and successful models — spreading innovation across communities statewide.



Ralph Abraham, MD, when he was Louisiana Surgeon General, and Pete Croughan, MD Louisiana Department of Health, Deputy Secretary, with Pete November, Ochsner Health CEO.

COMMUNITY IMPACT SPOTLIGHT:

A community-centered partnership from Xavier University of Louisiana and Ochsner Health framed Healthy State strategies

The partnership, **Ochsner Xavier Institute for Health Equity and Research (OXIHER)**, brings together Ochsner Health and Xavier University of Louisiana to improve health outcomes through research, education, advocacy and community engagement. Guided by five strategic pillars — Outcomes Research, Community Engagement, Population Health, Health Careers & Workforce Development and Advocacy — OXIHER addresses the root causes of poor health outcomes, expands access to care and strengthens partnerships statewide.

As OXIHER advances into the coming years, it will **deepen efforts across research, workforce development, community engagement, policy and population health**. Strengthening partnerships and securing new funding remain core priorities as research teams continue developing studies that help people better manage their health. A key focus includes disseminating the results of PROPEL IT, a research study which evaluated a virtual weight-loss program for adults with prediabetes or diabetes developed with Pennington Biomedical Research Center and the Ochsner Digital Medicine Program.

OXIHER will also broaden its role in preparing Louisiana's future healthcare workforce. Plans include expanding STEM outreach, supporting the creation of new science degree programs at local universities and collaborating more closely with educational partners to cultivate leaders ready to improve health outcomes statewide.

In the community, OXIHER will increase its presence at large-scale events, such as the ESSENCE Festival of Culture and the Urban League of Louisiana's Big Health Event. It will:

- Grow the Rock of Ages Health Ministry to provide education and screenings
- Introduce a new faith-based Health Ministry Toolkit to support additional houses of worship

Ongoing outreach to community-based organizations will focus on strengthening trust, collaborating on initiatives that meaningfully reflect community voice, and deepening long-term impact.

Working with policymakers and healthcare leaders, OXIHER will continue to advance opportunities for healthier lifestyles, chronic disease prevention and management and addressing social drivers that shape overall community health. At the same time, it will improve clinical care by:

- Advancing use of social determinants of health data
- Expanding self-service analytics tools to drive clinical insights
- Empowering healthcare teams to make faster, data-informed decisions

These steps are designed to embed community health principles into daily practice and support sustainable improvements in care delivery.

THE PATH FORWARD: Looking ahead, OXIHER will continue to build on this momentum by strengthening research, expanding workforce opportunities, deepening community partnerships and advancing its advocacy work. Together, Ochsner Health and Xavier University of Louisiana are helping shape more inclusive research, new ways to care for communities and a stronger healthcare workforce—building trust, expanding access and improving health for people across Louisiana.



Together, Ochsner Health and Xavier University of Louisiana are helping to build a stronger healthcare workforce and new ways to care for communities across our state.

Sustaining Momentum for a Healthier Louisiana

These gains happened because organizations, leaders and communities aligned around shared priorities and stayed focused on solutions that improve everyday life. **More families are getting care earlier. More people are managing chronic conditions. More communities are seeing what's possible when systems work together.**

Healthy State laid the groundwork for lasting impact. The systems that made this progress possible—policy frameworks, shared goals and trusted partnerships — are in place, and the work is already underway.

To carry this progress forward, Louisiana must continue expanding economic opportunity by strengthening education, growing jobs and attracting new industry. At the same time, critical social drivers must remain a priority, including broadband access, food security and workforce pathways that support families and long-term growth.

True progress is built on trust, sustained commitment and strong leadership.

Sustaining this momentum will require continued collaboration and scaling proven initiatives like Food is Medicine, digital access, health screenings and educator-employer coalitions. Louisiana is moving in the right direction — and together, we are building a future where every community has the opportunity to thrive.



Healthy State was built on a commitment to improving health for all Louisianans.

Over five years, we learned that collective impact requires collective action — and that lasting change is possible when partners come together around shared goals and data-driven solutions.

The work ahead belongs to all of us.





1450 Poydras St., Suite 2250 | New Orleans, LA 70112

healthystate@ochsner.org