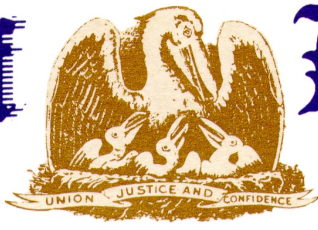


# State of Louisiana



## EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

### EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. BJ 2008 - 12

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS – ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO METROPOLITAN HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICT

- WHEREAS,** the Metropolitan Human Services District was created in 2003 as a special district to operate and manage community-based mental health, developmental disabilities, and addictive disorder programs and services for the parishes of Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines (R.S. 28:861 *et seq.*);
- WHEREAS,** it is the policy of the state of Louisiana, as established by the Legislature and Governor, to transform the system of care described herein to a community-based model of local involvement and control; it is also the state's policy to ensure the effective operation of the system of care to ensure that the system develops best practices and remains organized;
- WHEREAS,** on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, resulting in severe flooding, damage, devastation, and disruption of life in southeastern Louisiana, including the three parishes served by the Metropolitan Human Services District;
- WHEREAS,** the devastation and disruption caused by Hurricane Katrina have significantly increased the incidence of mental illness and substance abuse among the residents of the parishes served by the Metropolitan Human Services District, causing a corresponding increase in their need for services, despite the net loss of population in those parishes;
- WHEREAS,** the Metropolitan Human Services District has faced a significant challenge with the hurricane's impact on physical infrastructure of treatment facilities and the loss or displacement of many of the District's treatment professionals and other staff, and has faced challenges with establishing its readiness to accommodate the service needs of the community;
- WHEREAS,** the operations of the Metropolitan Human Services District have been further hampered by staff and board turnover, and instability with regard to its continuing operations potentially resulting in a loss of continuity, planning, supervision, and accountability in the operations of the District;
- WHEREAS,** the circumstances described above constitute a severe and unprecedented crisis in the provision of mental health, developmental services and addictive disorder services to the residents of the Metropolitan Human Services District; this crisis is exemplified by the provision of treatment which may be delayed, inadequate, or simply not provided at all by an overwhelmed and unprepared system, potentially resulting in significant increases in depression, suicides, strokes, stress-related deaths, violence (domestic and otherwise), psychiatric emergencies, and the "dumping" of mental patients at jails and hospital emergency rooms;
- WHEREAS,** before the Metropolitan Human Services District was created, and before it began performing its assigned functions for the parishes of Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines, those functions had been performed by the Department of Health and Hospitals (R.S. 28:865, 28:866, 36:254(I));
- WHEREAS,** the funds appropriated by the Legislature for the operations of the Metropolitan Human Services District are included in the budget of the Department of Health and Hospitals and are transferred from the Department to the District in accordance with the agreement between them, and if the Legislature fails to appropriate such funds, the Department will become responsible for performing the functions of the District for the parishes of Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines (R.S. 36:254(I));
- WHEREAS,** the effective operation of the Metropolitan Human Services District is of critical importance to the health and safety of the people of the state of Louisiana, and represents a fundamental component of the state's system of response for people in a mental health crisis; the failure of such a system could have a dangerous impact on law enforcement, as well as families facing mental health crisis;

- WHEREAS,** the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals is responsible for policy setting, development, and implementation of a statewide system for the delivery of mental health, developmental disabilities, and addictive disorder services, but has little enforcement authority under the law to deal with the action or inaction of the Metropolitan Human Services District;
- WHEREAS,** this statewide system is overseen by an interagency council; the secretary or his designee is the chair of the council, and the executive director of the Metropolitan Human Services District is one of its members (R.S. 28:382.2(A));
- WHEREAS,** the Department of Health and Hospitals may have resources, personnel and expertise at its disposal which are greatly needed by the Metropolitan Human Services District and which could be of great assistance and support to the District in its current crisis, thus helping it to improve the level and quality of services it provides to its residents; and
- WHEREAS,** The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals has asked for broad authority to provide needed assistance, assessment and support to the Metropolitan Human Services District.

**NOW THEREFORE I, Bobby Jindal,** Governor of the state of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and the laws of the state of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

- SECTION 1:** I hereby authorize the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals to utilize the resources, personnel and expertise of the Department and any contracted assistance deemed appropriate by the secretary to conduct an assessment of the current operational performance of the Metropolitan Human Services District. This assessment shall include a review of policies and procedures related to operational and financial controls, purchasing and contracting, clinical continuum of care, governance and quality of service. The assessment shall result in a detailed report of the findings and any recommendations for sustained improvement.
- SECTION 2:** The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals is authorized to take immediate steps to provide operational assistance and oversight to the Metropolitan Human Services District with all the assistance and support (including, but not limited to, staffing, planning, property, materials, and technical support) appropriate to expedite the effective operation of the Metropolitan Human Services District with the goal of achieving an absolute state of readiness for its intended functions.
- SECTION 3:** The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals is authorized to negotiate and execute a cooperative endeavor agreement with the Metropolitan Human Services District to carry out the mandate of this executive order and to facilitate the coordination of the efforts of the Department and the District for the greatest possible benefit to the residents of the District.
- SECTION 4:** This Order is effective upon signature and shall remain in effect until amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the governor, or terminated by operation of law.



**IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the city of Baton Rouge, on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2008.

**/S/ Bobby Jindal**  
**GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA**

**ATTEST BY**  
**THE GOVERNOR**

**/S/ Jay Dardenne**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE**