

TITLE X GRANTEE PROFILE: LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DECEMBER 2020

Within the Louisiana Department of Health's Office of Public Health, the Bureau of Family Health's (BFH) Reproductive Health Program (RHP) has been the state's Title X grantee for more than 40 years. The RHP's network of 66 service sites provides quality family planning services to thousands of Louisianans across the state every year.

Louisiana is unique because it has the highest proportion, among all states, of residents who were born in the state. The RHP program manager shares, "People are so in love with Louisiana—it's a very relational sort of place. When you talk with them, they want to know where you went to high school." This quality leads to a strong sense of identity and connectedness in communities with deeply rooted traditions and family ties, and it also brings a skepticism when it comes to community members being told what to do by external "experts." The program manager continues, "People don't care about what's working other places—they want to know how it will work here."

Louisiana is made up of parishes (counties), and the RHP engages with parish health units (PHUs) to bring flexible, relevant, personalized care to each parish it serves. The BFH clinical systems and program lead notes, "You can't go in with a preconceived notion of what these parishes need—they have different priorities. You have to go out. Talk. Listen." This approach includes a pre-assessment of each site, which enables the RHP to develop site-specific initiatives.

Of the state's 64 parishes, 62 have a Health Professional Shortage Area. The RHP operates service sites in 57 of these 62 parishes and uses a hub and spoke model that rotates advanced practice nurses among PHUs. In addition to offering other services, these advanced practice nurses provide testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). STI services are especially important in Louisiana, as the state has high rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, and syphilis.

The hub and spoke model is just one of the innovative ways that the RHP brings comprehensive care to its PHUs. In 2017, the RHP launched the Reproductive Health Integration Initiative (RHII) in an effort to expand access to quality reproductive health services in areas with the greatest need. The RHII engages federally qualified health centers to help them implement quality family planning in

FAST FACTS

HHS Region:	6
Year of initial Title X funding:	1979
Grantee tenure:	41 years
# of subrecipients:	9
# of service sites:	66

Website: [BFH RHP](#)

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

- As of 2016, more than 19 percent of Louisiana residents live in poverty, the third-highest percentage in the nation.
- In the state, 62 of 64 parishes have a Health Professional Shortage Area.
- Louisiana's rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, and syphilis are among the highest in the nation.

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primary care settings throughout the state. The initiative provides sites with an opportunity to work toward a state-awarded designation, which indicates to clients that the service site provides quality care.

The RHP's approach to service delivery and quality improvement is grounded in improvement science (an approach to improving quality, safety, and value in healthcare). The program's quality improvement and data managers have championed the Triple Aim model (originally developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement) to improve clients' care, improve the health of populations, and reduce the per capita cost of healthcare. The RHP program manager shares, "Data and data analytics have been great tools in driving us to success. We collect family planning data annually and semiannually, so we have a chance to course-correct every six months."

This reporting and analysis schedule supports the RHP team's dedication to continuous improvement, as demonstrated by its response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The RHP program manager explains that, while the team had already been preparing to implement telehealth, they were on a year-long timeline. In response to COVID-19, they made the shift within just two weeks. The RHP program manager says, "This team is incredible, just the amount of dedication and passion."

The BFH clinical systems and program lead notes, "Now, we're thinking forward to post-COVID-19. How do we translate everything we've learned into our work post-pandemic? How will we use these learnings?" The RHP program manager adds, "Our team continues to be dedicated to removing barriers to access to care and contraceptives."

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Special thanks to Tisha Reed, RHP program manager, and Gail Gibson, BFH clinical systems and program lead, for their contributions to this story.

ABOUT TITLE X

For 50 years, Title X family planning clinics have played a critical role in ensuring access to a broad range of family planning and related preventive health services for millions of low-income or uninsured individuals and others. Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services.

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