

Ellevate LA 2021 Policy Statements

Behavioral Health

Ellevate Louisiana recognizes our State's increased need for mental health and substance abuse services. Louisiana's need for these services was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic as people faced isolation, anxiety, and depression. While Louisiana has some systems in place to respond to behavioral health needs, the biggest gap area is the lack of a statewide crisis response system. When services are not available during a behavioral health crisis, our citizens end up in jails, hospitals, or psychiatric institutions with poor outcomes and unnecessary costs. The Louisiana Department of Health has worked to develop a plan for a statewide crisis response system that includes Mobile Crisis Intervention, Behavioral Health Urgent Care Centers, Community Brief Crisis Support and Crisis Stabilization.

Ellevate Louisiana supports the additional behavioral health funding that is included in [HB1](#) to begin the implementation of these essential crisis services.

Long Term Care

Long Term Care consists of institutionally based services in nursing homes, services in alternative residential and community settings like assisted living and PACE (Programs for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly), and home-based care.

Over the years, Louisiana has made efforts to “rebalance” the state's long term care system to provide greater access to home and community-based alternatives so that people can stay in their own homes and communities. Despite these efforts, very little progress has been made.

While the COVID-19 crisis may have highlighted the inherent problems in institutional living, it has always been clear that most adults want to remain in their own homes as long as possible. Long waiting lists for waivers and limited access to PACE and other day programs have made the hope of staying at home impossible for most.

Ellevate Louisiana supports significant reform of long-term care including additional funding for waivers, PACE programs, and other home and community-based alternatives to nursing home care.

Telehealth

Telehealth has been poised to change health care delivery for many years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth was the key to continued health care and became a primary rather than a secondary method of delivery. Over the last year, many lessons have been learned about when and how telehealth

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can be most effective. The industry learned that there are many forms of health care that can be efficiently delivered through telehealth.

Ellevate Louisiana supports the continued expansion and refinement of telehealth to assure increased availability in appropriate settings with the necessary safeguards to prevent fraud and abuse.