Gov. Edwards Announces Creation of COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force

April 10, 2020

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the creation of the Louisiana COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, which will look at how health inequities are affecting communities that are most impacted by the coronavirus.

“We know that right now 70 percent of our deaths in Louisiana from coronavirus are African Americans. This is a disturbing trend and one that deserves our attention, which is why we are engaging a group of leaders right now while the crisis is still ongoing,” Gov. Edwards said. “When we talk about health equity, we mean everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. The great thing is that the findings and recommendations made by this Task Force will help everyone better access quality care and improve health outcomes. It will also leverage our research capabilities and intellectual brainpower in a collective manner to tackle this daunting issue. I am asking our universities and research institutions to lead this effort.”

Groups that will participate in the task force include:

- Southern University’s Nelson Mandela School of Public Policy
- Xavier University’s Department of Public Health Sciences
- Health Science Centers at LSU and Tulane
- LDH Office of Public Health
- LDH Bureau of Minority Health Access
- Pennington Biomedical Research Center
- Schools of Nursing at all of Louisiana’s universities

The immediate assignment is to make sure communities with health disparities are blanketed with good information on COVID-19 safety and prevention; provide the medical community with best practices and protocols for treating communities with underlying medical conditions and health disparities; and ensure testing availability and ease of access for all communities. This Task Force will begin its work immediately and their research will result in the creation of a Dashboard on Health Equity.

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