



Minutes

**Meeting of Louisiana Emergency Response Network Board
Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.**

Held at:

**Louisiana Emergency Response
Network
7979 Independence Blvd., Suite 207
Baton Rouge, LA 70806**

Welcome/Introductions

The April 16, 2026 meeting of the Louisiana Emergency Response Network Board (LERN) was called to order at approximately 1:05 p.m. by Granville Morse, MD, Chair, presiding. The meeting was held pursuant to public notice, each member received notice, and notice was properly posted.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Chris Hector, LERN Administrative Director, with the following results:

Members Present:

Granville Jones, Chair
John Jones, MD, Immediate Past Chair
Vanessa de la Cruz, MD
Deiadra J. Garrett, MD, Immediate Past Chair
Capt. Philip Daniels
Dan Godbee, MD
Hon. Chance Henry, Louisiana State Representative
Omar Leonards, MD
Will Mosier, MD
Julette Saussy, MD
Honorable Christopher Turner, State Representative
Robert K. White, MD
Monica S. Nijoka, MHA, BSN, RN
Keith Van Meter, MD

Karen O. Wyble, DNP, MSN, MHA, MBA, RN

Richard Zweifler, MD

There were 16 board members present when the meeting began constituting a quorum.

Members Absent:

Honorable Katrina Jackson-Andrews, State Senator

Jeffrey E. Carter, MD

Neal Fudge

Paul Gladden, MD

Eva Lamendola, OD

Brandon J. Mauldin, MD

Honorable Brach Myers, La. State Senator

J. Patrick Smith, Jr., MD

Michele K. Sutton, FACHE

Porter Taylor, IV

Staff Present:

Paige Hargrove, Executive Director

Chris Hector, Administrative Director

Yvette Legendre, LERN Regional Coordinator

Donice Fletcher, LERN Regional Coordinator

Deborah Spann, LERN Education Coordinator

Justin Schleis, LERN Data Manager

Sarah Templet, LERN Regional Coordinator

Cassandra Woods, LERN Finance Manager

Vence Beches, LERN Disaster Preparedness Manager

Contractors Present:

Sheryl Martin-Schild, MD, PhD, FANA, HAHA

Michael Sutherland, MD (Trauma Medical Director)

Rudy Gomez, SSA Consultants

Jason Allemand, Communication Center Supervisor

Call for Public Comment

Chris Hector asked for any public comment. No comments.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Monica Nijoka and seconded by Dr. Will Mosier to approve the agenda as written. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2026

A motion was made by Dr. Garrett and seconded by Ms. Nijoka to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2026 Board meeting. See Attachment A. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Ratification of Commission Members and Resignations

A motion was made by Dr. Jones and seconded by Ms. Zweifler, to accept the following resignations from and to approve the following appointments to the following regional commissions:

Resignations

Scott F. Thames, Jr. MD, FACEP – from Region 3 Commission;
Earl Eues, Jr. - from Region 3 Commission;
Adrian Broulliette, NRP – from Region 9 Commission; and
Dawson Primes, LEN – from Region 9 Commission.

Appointments

Tommie Hicks, NRP - to Region 2 Commission (nominee representing Louisiana Rural Ambulance Alliance);
Kim Beetz – to Region 3 Commission (nominee representing GOHSEP);
Carriel Taylor Nipp, MD - to Region 5 Commission (nominee representing American College of Cardiology);
Jessica Sonnier, MD – to Region 5 Commission (nominee representing Louisiana State Medical Society);
Melissa Bawlsler, BSN, RN, CEN, TCRN – to Region 5 Commission (nominee representing Emergency Nurse Association);
Michael Rommen, DO, FAAEP – to Region 8 Commission (nominee representing American College of Emergency Physicians);
Candice Ziegler, NRP – to Region 9 Commission (nominee representing Louisiana Ambulance Alliance); and
Clint Ory – to Region 9 Commission (nominee representing GOHSEP).

The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Financial Disclosure

Paige Hargrove, LERN Executive Director, reminded the LERN Board members of the tier 2.1 financial disclosure requirement, due by May 15, 2026. Ms. Hargrove distributed a list of the completion status for the board. No formal action taken.

Executive Director Report

Annual Report

Executive Director Hargrove provided copies of the 2025 LERN Annual Report – See Attachment B. No formal action taken by the board.

HB 56 and HB 615

Ms. Hargrove provided an update on the status of HB 56. HB 56 amends the DUI fines out of act 194 in order to correct the unintended consequence of triggering a jury trial for DUI fines exceeding \$1000. Representative Turner shared that HB 56 was sent to the Governor for signature today. Ms. Hargrove thanked Representatives Turner and Henry for their work with Rep. Villio on the bill. No formal action taken by the board.

Ms. Hargrove noted she is following HB 615 which would require public meetings to be broadcast live. No formal action taken by the board.

Traffic Fine Data

Ms. Hargrove reminded the board of the request made at the January 22, 2026 board meeting to determine the impact of amending out the DUI fines from Act 194. Data provided, which is based on the 2025 collections from the Louisiana Traumatic Brain Injury and Spinal Cord Fund (LTBISCF). The LTBISCF collected approximately \$113,650 in CY 2025 from DUI fees – See Attachment C. Discussed how and who collects fines and makes payments in each parish. LERN has collected funds from 42/64 parishes. The plan is to re-engage with all parishes after the Legislative Session. No formal action taken by the board.

Executive Director Evaluation

Ms. Hargrove shared a copy of the 2025 Executive Director Evaluation and thanked the board for the support and feedback. See Attachment D. Ms. Hargrove clarified funding related to previous merit increases. No formal action was taken by the board.

Stroke System Update

Stroke Sub-Committee Recommendation

Dr. Sheryl Martin-Schild presented the recommendation from the stroke sub-committee to demote hospital AAJ from a Stroke Capable Off-Site ED to a Stroke Referral Center due to inability to meet door to needle performance metrics. See Attachment E. She provided history of not

meeting Door to Needle metric despite remediation efforts. Hospital AAJ submitted Q1, 2026 data and the DTN time was 112 minutes. Dr. Martin-Schild communicated an on-site consultation is scheduled for April 20th and LERN is committed to helping identify gaps in processes and to help identify strategies for success. Noted that we do not identify the name of the hospital to the sub-committee or the board to ensure impartial recommendations/decisions. Additionally, Dr. Martin-Schild expressed concerns about many of these patients arriving by EMS when there are several certified stroke centers in close proximity. Discussion ensued related to EMS compliance with stroke destination protocols. Recommend LERN Regional Coordinator to work with hospital to PI all stroke patients presenting by EMS to hospital AAJ.

A motion was made by Dr. Jones and seconded by Dr. Mosier to accept the recommendation of the Stroke Sub-Committee. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Pediatric Stroke Algorithm

Dr. Martin-Schild shared the pediatric stroke algorithm and answered questions from the board. See Attachment F. The algorithm is currently being vetted by the pediatric stroke workgroup. No formal action was taken by the board.

Trauma Update

Level 4 Trauma Center Next Steps

Dr. Sutherland provided information on Level 4 trauma centers. The ACS-COT released preliminary L4 requirements which we are now reviewing to determine which work best for Louisiana. Executive Director met with LHA CEO to discuss initiative and scheduled to meet with Rural Hospital Coalition CEO tomorrow. Working to establish the workgroup and develop a survey to determine rural hospital interest. Dr. Sutherland answered questions from the Board. No formal action taken by the board.

NDMS Pilot Program

Dr. Keith White provided the board with information on the National Disaster Management System (NDMS) pilot program. LSU Shreveport is one of the pilot sites. The NDMS Pilot is designed to address the limitations our military and civilian health systems must overcome in preparing for large-scale events. The task is for the country to prepare for 1000 patients a day for 100 days. Dr. White discussed LERN's role in helping coordinate patient movement and how the LERN system would be engaged. He answered the board's questions and the board requested Dr. White to keep the board updated as the pilot progresses. See Attachment G for his presentation. No formal action taken by the board.

SANE Nurse/Behavioral Health Discussion

Dr. Morse informed the board of discussions held by the LERN Executive Committee related to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and Behavioral Health transfers/transports. There is no coordinated system for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) in Louisiana. There are areas that have great plans to meet the needs of individuals needing an examination, but each region of the state has different coverage models resulting in fragmented care, especially in rural Louisiana. Dr. Morse and board members discussed the need for a SANE coordinator and a method to identify hospitals capable of providing the examinations. Discussed possible role of the LERN Communication Center helping to track SANE resources statewide and helping facilitate transport/transfer to the appropriate facility. Representative Spell plans to run a bill this session to address gaps in order to meet the needs of this population. Report results of legislation at the board at the next meeting.

Discussed behavioral health issues related to ED bed holds and cross state transfers for admission. Paige informed on visit to STRAC and how they handle behavioral health with pre-hospital assessment algorithm that helps determine if they can go directly to behavioral health facility and bypass an emergency department. Board discussed some options currently in place for direct transport to behavioral health, but this needs to be fully developed statewide. No formal action by the board.

Regional Commission Update

Regions 1, 3 and 9

Yvette Legendre, LERN Regional Coordinator for Regions 1, 3 and 9 provided an overview of her regions. See [Attachment H](#). The board recognized and thanked Yvette for her work. Dr. Martin-Schild answered questions related to volume of large vessel occlusive strokes.

Budget

Review Budget Status

Dr. Wyble, the LERN Treasurer, discussed the status of the Budget. See [Attachment I](#). No formal action was taken by the Board.

Paige Hargrove noted LERN would receive approximately \$30,392 in the Supplemental bill for work performed during Hurricanes Laura, Francine and the Wildfires. This is reimbursement from FEMA. It will be one time money and we should be able to carryforward to FY27.

See [Attachment J](#) for slide deck used at the meeting.

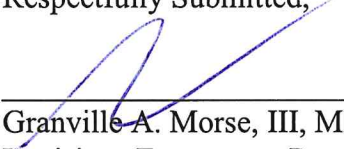
Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Dr. Zweifler to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed after a unanimous vote in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Granville A. Morse, III, MD, Chair
Louisiana Emergency Response Network Board

Date: 8/20/26