



NEWSLETTER NO. 2

ELLEVATE LOUISIANA



ELLEVATE LOUISIANA'S MISSION IS TO EMPOWER WOMEN LEADERS THROUGHOUT LOUISIANA BY CONNECTING & EDUCATING THEM ON THE CHALLENGES IMPACTING OUR STATE & DATA-DRIVEN, NON-PARTISAN SOLUTIONS TO USHER IN A NEW COMPETITIVENESS FOR OUR STATE.

The Work Behind the Mission

It is that time of an even-numbered year... in a year with lots of new legislators and ideas, where we read bills, listen to conversations and hope for the best but prepare for the worst! As we read nearly 1,200 bills and tune in to see how and where the discussions are heading, it is good to take a minute to pause. I know that I had a lot to learn in my first session, from the complex state budget to how to do the job I was elected to do. There is nothing simple about the task at hand. There is an incredible amount of nuance in all of it that affects Louisianans in ways as diverse as its people. By the end of this year, Louisiana is likely to have materially changed its elections, the criminal justice system, K-12 education, the business environment, how litigation is conducted and even our constitution.

We built Ellevate Louisiana so that we could look at these changes through each other's eyes and understand how all the nuances affect the disparate kinds of lives that we all lead. It is difficult to understand how legislation and appropriation affect people that are not living life quite the way you are. We need more people to do that because the effects are profound.





Since its inception, Ellevate Louisiana has taken positions on many issues such as funding for Early Care and Education, Home and Community-Based Supports for Long Term Care, funding for Crisis Stabilization, and funding to help victims of Domestic Violence. We worked with our members from each side of the political spectrum to arrive at a joint belief that these funding goals were important and deserving of taxpayer funding, and we got it done. We have lofty goals again this year that include supporting efforts to alleviate Workforce Shortages in our state,

urging continued funding for our priorities from past years and even advocating for updates to Medicaid reimbursement rates so that we can improve access to care. Together, we CAN elevate Louisiana.

Ellevate just held its Legislative Leadership Conference where we heard from the Governor and many of his cabinet members, the Speaker of the House and several of his committee chairs, and the chairmen of the powerful Senate Finance and Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Committees. It was a huge success with 350 registered attendees. We believe that this event grows by leaps and bounds every year because so many of you care so much about what happens to our little state. Collectively, we are a dichotomy of results: the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the educated and the not, those living healthy bountiful lives and those struggling to make ends meet and keep their families alive from day to day. The important thing to remember is that we all matter.

Ellevate's next event is our Day at the Legislature on April 22nd (see page 6 for more information). We invite you to join us as we explore the Capitol and discuss the myriad of opinions on what happens in the tall building in downtown Baton Rouge. Don't feel like you don't have anything to lend, because we all matter to the future to Louisiana.

By: Julie Stokes, *Ellevate Louisiana CEO & President*



Q & A with Kathy Kliebert

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER PATH?

I have always considered myself an accidental leader. I was not one of those people you could identify as a “born leader”. I was not ambitious, I always just tried to do whatever job I had to the best of my ability. I didn’t aspire to any particular position. I focused on doing the job at hand and making a difference whether I was a part time social worker or administrator. I also volunteered a lot no matter where I was working which ended up offering a lot of leadership opportunities. I started off working part- time as a social worker with LDH and was asked over time to take on more responsibilities as facility administrator, assistant secretary, deputy secretary and then as Secretary of the Department.



HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO ENTER THIS FIELD?

I always knew I wanted to do something that would have some impact on society. I originally started college as a pre-med major as I thought I wanted to be a Research Doctor. However, after a dismal encounter with organic chemistry my freshman year, I looked for a different field. Social work offered the diversity I was looking for as well the opportunity to help others and have some societal influence.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACED DAILY AS LDH SECRETARY?

I think the most difficult part was the enormity of the Department and trying to stay informed of all the different issues which included food safety, water safety, public health, Medicaid, developmental disabilities, aging, behavioral health and others. It was extremely challenging to stay updated in all those areas and being able to respond to press, legislators, and departmental employees in a competent manner as well as to address policy issues in all those areas. I think it was especially difficult because health issues often mean your decisions can either positively or negatively directly affect so many people's lives.

WHAT WERE THE REWARDS YOU GOT FROM YOUR JOB AS LDH SECRETARY?

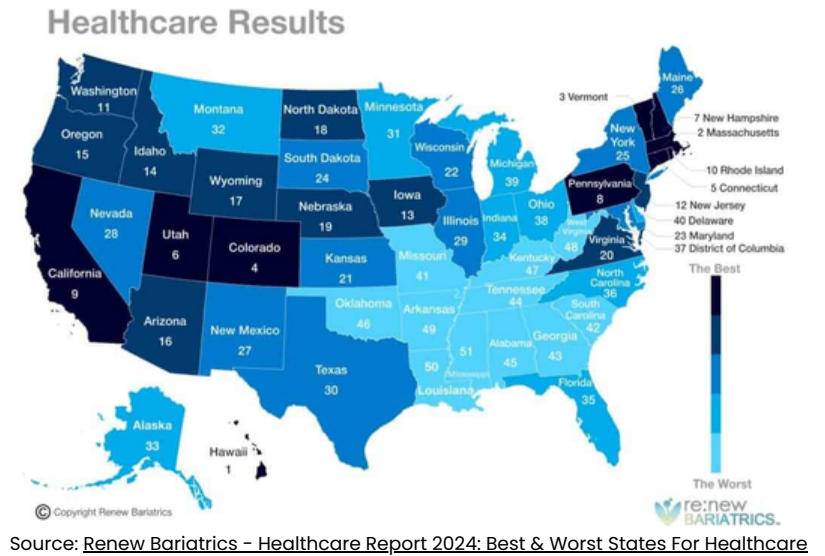
I always felt that many decisions I made positively impacted the lives of thousands of people in Louisiana. Whether that was allowing people with disabilities choices in where they lived, expanding Medicaid coverage of services, or providing easier access to behavioral health services. It was extremely rewarding to know that I helped to improve people’s lives even in a small way.

WHAT CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR DECISION TO SERVE AS CO-CHAIR FOR ELLEVATE LA’S HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE?

I am very passionate about improving health and wellness in Louisiana. The Health and Wellness Committee provides a platform to discuss and promote critical health and wellness policy issues. Although I am mostly retired, I want to continue to have a chance to provide service to the community and Ellevate offers that opportunity.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE SOME OF THE TOP CHALLENGES LOUISIANA CURRENTLY FACES REGARDING HEALTH & WELLNESS?

Louisiana continues to be ranked last or near last in every category concerning health and wellness. We have a lifestyle that includes poor diets and limited exercise that is not conducive to good health outcomes. Our Medicaid reimbursement rates make it difficult to find quality Medicaid providers. We have limited choices in long term care and continue to institutionalize those that are aging, have disabilities or have behavioral health needs. The child welfare system needs significant reform.



WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH & WELLNESS BILLS IN THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION?

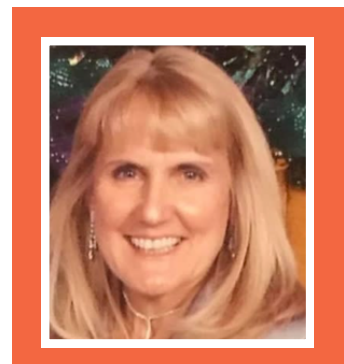
HB 1 is probably the most important bill concerning health and wellness as it will indicate whether priority is placed on increasing support for Medicaid reimbursement, increasing waiver opportunities, expanding behavioral health services, including more money for Domestic Violence and supporting increases for the Department of Children and Family Services. SB190 by Senator Boudreaux specifically requires the development of a plan to increase Medicaid Reimbursement rates. SB 145 by Senator Barrow specifically requests that the new State Child Ombudsman have needed access to child records.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE YOUR MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR PROFESSION?

I think the most significant contributions I have had are my efforts to deinstitutionalize people with disabilities and those with behavioral health challenges. Under my leadership, we reduced the number of state Developmental Centers from nine to one. We also provided a major increase in waiver opportunities for both those with developmental disabilities and those that are aging so that they could live in their communities instead of in an institution. I also helped to develop a crisis management system for behavioral health which offered crisis services and outpatient services for those in danger of going to jail or a psychiatric hospital.

LOOKING BACK, WOULD YOU HAVE DONE ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY IN YOUR CAREER?

As I said at the beginning, I think most of my career was unplanned and instead was an evolution of moving towards the things I thought were most important. I feel incredibly blessed to have had the opportunities I was given in my career. I think the one thing I might have done differently was to be more aggressive in policy decisions when I had the opportunity to make changes.



KATHY KLIEBERT
HEALTH & WELLNESS CO-CHAIR

By: Yvonne Krumins, *Ellevate Louisiana Policy Coordinator*

Coping Amidst the Chaos: Finding the Elusive Work/Life Balance



Usage of the phrase 'work-life balance' only started in the United States in 1986,¹ so it's no wonder that we're still struggling to figure it out 30+ years later. Let's face it, there are so many looming deadlines, impending projects, and shortage of personnel, it can be easy to work yourself into a tailspin. Don't think you're alone though! According to a survey conducted by Northwestern National Life, 4 out of every 10 employees state that their jobs are 'very or

extremely' stressful.² This level of stress kills; too much stress³ can result in high blood pressure, heart disease and strokes.

US companies fall behind other countries when it comes to making sure employees can create balance between work and home. Meaning, it's up to YOU to seize control of your life and try to force some balance in there. Try these suggestions:

- Schedule down time on a regular basis, even if it's merely a day at home where you catch up on laundry. Feeling like you're in control at least in your home life can help alleviate your stress levels. Of course, a vacation away is the best option, but not always financially practical. The key is, get out of the office and unplug for a while (yes, including electronics.)
- Take a moment and remind yourself why you work in the first place. Consciously look at your bank account or mortgage statement and remember why money is important.

Remembering the financial benefits and other perks work provides may help you at least put things in perspective and get through challenging days.

- Employ the five-year rule. Will this client's behavior bother you in 5 years? Or those poor office politics? Heck, in today's environment of rotating staff, will your boss be here in a year? Remember that daily stresses are often not long term, so grab a coffee (or a cocktail!), step out of your current environment and assess the situation.

- As much as I'll tout having a few cocktails to relax, it's not a long-term strategy for coping with hardcore daily stress. You MUST take care of your health. Getting sick (or being perpetually hungover) is not a long-term strategy and can help tip your stress level into the red. Take vitamins, eat fruits and veggies every day and get in a stress-busting workout or even just a 20-minute walk during lunch at least 3-4 times a week.

- Re-connect with your friends, family, and community. As the old saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved. Turn to your support network to problem solve or even just to vent. Better yet, get out into your community and volunteer. You'll do good while putting your own problems into perspective.

- Have kids? SIMPLIFY. Children don't need things – they need you. Keep toys, meals, furniture, and clothing as simple as possible and focus instead on the TIME you spend with your kids. This is a much larger discussion and one that Lisa Belkin tackles perfectly in her blog, [Motherlode](#).

Remember, this is your life we're talking about.

Unfortunately, only you can do something about the stress in your life and your work/life balance. So, commit to just one of the above for 4 weeks and see if it makes a difference in your life.

Sources:

- 1 – [Wikipedia – Work Life Balance](#)
- 2 – [CDC Study: Stress..At Work, 1999](#)
- 3 – [BBC – The Consequences of Too Much Stress](#)



BY: VALERIE GRUBB
KEYNOTE SPEAKER, CORPORATE TRAINER & EXECUTIVE



UPCOMING EVENT:

ELLEVATE LOUISIANA'S DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE 2024

Join Ellevate Louisiana as we get an up-close look at advocating at the Louisiana State Capitol

REGISTER

ONLINE TODAY!

MEMBERS: \$35 | NON-MEMBERS: \$70

Lunch at the Lt. Governor's Apartment



Location

**Louisiana State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA 70802**



Date

April 22, 2024



Time

8:30am



504-655-0930



mallory@stokesflame.com



3501 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 900
Metairie, LA 70002