

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 944

BY REPRESENTATIVE HILFERTY

HEALTH SERVICES: Creates the Louisiana Women's Health Consortium

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 40:1122, relative to the creation of the Women's Consortium within the  
3 Louisiana Department of Health; to provide for the membership of the consortium;  
4 to provide for the functions of the consortium; to provide for the organization of the  
5 consortium; to require an annual report; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 40:1122 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §1122. Women's Health Consortium

9 A. There is hereby established within the Louisiana Department of Health,  
10 office on women's health and community health, the Women's Health Consortium.

11 B. The consortium shall be comprised of the following voting members:

12 (1) One member who is the surgeon general or his designee.

13 (2) One member who is the executive director of the Louisiana State Board  
14 of Medical Examiners or his designee.

15 (3) One member from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center  
16 specializing in areas of women's health appointed by the executive director of the  
17 Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

18 (4) One member from the Tulane School of Medicine specializing in the  
19 areas of women's health appointed by the dean of the Tulane School of Medicine.

1           (5) One member from the Ochsner Health System specializing in the areas  
2           of women's health appointed by the president of the Ochsner Health System.

3           (6) One member from Woman's Hospital of Baton Rouge appointed by the  
4           president of Woman's Hospital of Baton Rouge.

5           (7) One member from the Louisiana House of Representatives appointed by  
6           the speaker.

7           (8) One member from the Louisiana Senate by the president.

8           (9) One member who is the secretary of Louisiana Works or his designee.

9           (10) One member who is the commissioner of insurance or his designee.

10          (11) One member who is assistant secretary for the office of women's health  
11          and community health or his designee.

12          (12) One member who is the director of the governor's office on women's  
13          policy or his designee.

14          (13) One member who is a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant from  
15          a rural community.

16          (14) One member who is an epidemiologist or health statistician appointed  
17          by the surgeon general.

18          (15) One member who is a healthcare consumer appointed by the surgeon  
19          general.

20          E. The consortium may engage and solicit, as necessary, input,  
21          recommendations, and guidance on issues pertaining to the advancement of women's  
22          health from interested parties and stakeholders. The consortium shall be comprised  
23          of the following nonvoting members:

24                 (1) One member from the Xavier University College of Pharmacy appointed  
25                 by the dean of the Xavier University College of Pharmacy.

26                 (2) One member from the University of Louisiana at Monroe College of  
27                 Pharmacy appointed by the dean of the University of Louisiana at Monroe College  
28                 of Pharmacy.

1           (3) One member from the Baton Rouge General Medical Center specializing  
2           in women's health issues appointed by the president of Baton Rouge General.

3           (4) One member from Our Lady of the Lake Health specializing in women's  
4           health appointed by the president of Our Lady of the Lake.

5           (5) One member from the Louisiana Association of Health Plans appointed  
6           by the executive director of Louisiana Association of Health Plans.

7           (6) One member from the Louisiana Hospital Association appointed by the  
8           president or chief executive officer of the Louisiana Hospital Association.

9           F. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

10          G.(1) The consortium shall adopt rules and regulations to provide for the  
11          governance of the consortium. Such rules and regulations shall include but not be  
12          limited to procedures and grounds for the removal of any consortium member.

13          (2) Procedures for filling a vacancy created by the removal, resignation, or  
14          death of any consortium member prior to the end of the consortium member's term  
15          shall follow those used for initial appointments.

16          H. Each consortium member shall serve without compensation except  
17          members may receive reimbursement for expenses in accordance with the guidelines  
18          of the entity they represent.

19          I.(1) The member from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center shall  
20          serve as the initial chairman for two years.

21          (2) After the term of the initial chairman, the consortium shall elect a  
22          chairman every two years who shall serve for a term of two years

23          (3) The consortium shall elect a vice chairman and may elect other officers  
24          as deemed appropriate.

25          J. The domicile of the consortium shall be East Baton Rouge Parish, but the  
26          consortium may hold meetings elsewhere in the state.

27          K. The consortium shall hold quarterly public meetings unless decided by  
28          a vote of the consoritum or by order of the chairman. Special meeting shall be held  
29          on call of the chairman or of a quorum of the voting members of the consortium

1           L. The number of members necessary to constitute a quorum for the  
2           transaction of business shall be a majority of voting members of the consortium. A  
3           majority vote of the voting members of the consortium members constituting a  
4           quorum is necessary for any action taken by the consortium.

5           M. Each department participating on the consortium shall assist as needed  
6           in providing staff support for the consrtium, including but not limited to the  
7           scheduling of meetings, providing public notice of scheduled meetings, and posting  
8           information about the consortium and its meeting minutes online.

9           N. The functions of the consortium shall be to accomplish all of the  
10          following:

11           (1) Develop initiative known as the Funding Priority Program for Women's  
12          Health Initiatives to identify current funding provided for women's health initiatives,  
13          prioritize funding needed to sustain and enhance current effective initiatives, and  
14          identify new initiatives to support emerging scientific research and innovation, as  
15          well as any additional measures that will advance women's health, including but not  
16          limited to public-private partnerships and multi-state collaborations.

17           (2) Develop an Interagency Women's Health Agenda for the state. The  
18          agenda shall include but not be limited to all of the following:

19           (a) Strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in research, access to care,  
20          medical education, funding, policy, regulations, public education, and access to  
21          information pertaining to women's health at every stage of life.

22           (b) The Funding Priority Program for Women's Health Initiatives.

23           (3) Focus on those issues of health which significantly affect women in  
24          ~~Louisiana~~ this state, including but not limited to perimenopause, menopause, and  
25          post menopause.

26           (4) Serve as a resource to the state on issues affecting women's health at  
27          every stage of life.

28           (5) Identify systemic barriers and health gaps to standard access of quality  
29          care across women's health and possible solutions.

1           (6) Recommendations on solutions and partnerships to drive innovation in  
2           the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of women-specific conditions in the state.

3           (7) Evaluate the training in the delivery of care for medical students and  
4           physicians in the state, relating to the health issues which significantly affect women.

5           (8) Evaluate the impacts of health issues on the workforce.

6           (9) Ensure information sharing between governmental and non-governmental  
7           entities relative to women's health issues.

8           (10) Identify a system for educating women on health issues to improve the  
9           quality of life and increase longevity.

10          (11) The consortium shall coordinate an online clearinghouse of credible  
11          online evidence-based information and resources, including the Interagency  
12          Women's Health Agenda, as identified by the consortium.

13          (12) The consortium shall maintain confidentiality of any information or  
14          records provided to it, as required by the laws relative to such records and  
15          information.

16          O.(1) The consortium shall submit an annual written report that summarizes  
17          the activities of the consortium for the year prior to December thirty-first each year.  
18          The consortium shall submit the annual report to the governor, president of the  
19          Senate, and speaker of the House of Representatives.

20          (2) The consortium shall also send a copy of the report to the David R.  
21          Poynter Legislative Research Library, the House and Senate committees on health  
22          and welfare, and the governor's office at least sixty days prior to each regular  
23          session.

24          P. For the purposes of this Section, the following terms have the meanings  
25          ascribed to them:

26          (1) "Consortium" means a network of public and private sector expert and  
27          health professionals specializing in women's health, as well as policy leaders  
28          necessary to effectuate change for a comprehensive women's health agenda for the  
29          state.

1           (2) "Funding Priority Program for Women's Health Initiatives" means a  
 2           schedule of detailed women's health initiatives in this state which are prioritized and  
 3           adopted by the Louisiana Women's Health Consortium each fiscal year which  
 4           includes any current funding provided, the entity receiving the funding, and any  
 5           additional funding needed in ensuing fiscal years. The schedule also includes any  
 6           alternative means of funding identified from potential public-private partnerships and  
 7           multi-state collaborations.

8           (3) "Interagency Women's Health Agenda" means a yearly assessment by the  
 9           consortium given to the governor, legislature, and made available to the public of  
 10          strengths, weaknesses and opportunities on those issues of health which significantly  
 11          affect women in particular perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopause.

12          (4) "Perimenopause" means an extended transitional stage that takes place  
 13          prior to menopause. This stage is initiated by fluctuations in hormone levels.

14          (5) "Menopause" means a twelve months since you last menstrual cycle and  
 15          the end of reproductive capabilities.

16          (6) "Postmenopause" means the remaining lifespan after menopause.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 944 Original

2026 Regular Session

Hilferty

**Abstract:** Creates the Women's Health Consortium.

Proposed law establishes the Women's Health Consortium (consortium) within the La. Dept. of Health (LDH), office on women's health and community health.

Proposed law provides for the membership of the consortium, including voting and nonvoting members.

Proposed law provides that the consortium may engage and solicit, as necessary, input, recommendations, and guidance on issues pertaining to the advancement of women's health from interested parties and stakeholders.

Proposed law provides that each member shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

Proposed law provides that the consortium shall adopt rules and regulations to provide for the governance of the consortium.

Proposed law further provides that the rules and regulations shall include but not be limited to procedures and grounds for the removal of any consortium member.

Proposed law provides that each consortium member shall serve without compensation, except members may receive reimbursement for expenses in accordance with the guidelines of the entity they represent.

Proposed law requires the member from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center to serve as the initial chairperson for two years.

Proposed law further requires the consortium, after the initial two year period, to elect a new chairperson every two years.

Proposed law provides that the consortium shall elect a vice chairperson and may elect other officers, if appropriate.

Proposed law provides that the domicile of the consortium shall be in East Baton Rouge Parish; however, the consortium may hold meetings elsewhere in the state.

Proposed law requires the consortium to hold quarterly public meetings, unless otherwise voted against by the members or by order of the chairperson.

Proposed law provides the procedure the consortium to host special meetings.

Proposed law requires each member participating on the consortium to assist as needed in providing staff support.

Proposed law provides the functions of the consortium.

Proposed law requires the consortium to submit an annual written report that summarizes the activities of the consortium. Proposed law provides the time period for when the report shall be submitted and whom it shall be submitted to.

Proposed law defines "consortium", "Funding Priority Program for Women's Health Initiatives", "Interagency Women's Health Agenda", "Perimenopause", "Menopause", and "Postmenopause".

(Adds R.S. 40:1122)