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Louisiana Center for Health Equity Statement on Passage of Senate Bill 116

BATON ROUGE (June 6, 2022) — The Louisiana Center for Health Equity issues the following statement from President Alma Stewart Allen in response to the passing of Senate Bill 116.

“The **Louisiana Center for Health Equity** (LCHE) remains dedicated to advocating for equitable health outcomes for all Louisiana citizens. In 2019, Louisiana ranked 50th in health outcomes for women and children. In response to these poor outcomes, LCHE envisioned and advocated for the creation of a Louisiana Office on Women’s Health within the Louisiana Department of Health to improve women’s health outcomes across the State.

SB 116 will create an Office on Women’s Health. The Louisiana Center for Health Equity and the Campaign to Establish the Louisiana Office on Women’s Health, organized by LCHE, appreciate the bipartisan support for the Office on Women’s Health and acknowledge that the attention women’s health disparities received is a step toward progress.

As it stands, there are serious concerns with the legislation. Several components of SB 116 seem to contradict the purpose of an Office on Women’s Health. These concerns include significantly limiting the scope of the Office by changing the purpose of the office from leading and coordinating efforts “across the state” to “within the Louisiana Department of Health.” As such, the intent of broadening the scope to include community health is unclear and appears to be inconsistent. The bill's exclusionary language prevents specific groups of individuals from accessing potentially lifesaving care other women in the state have access to, raising serious concerns that contradict what LCHE stands for.”

About Louisiana Center for Health Equity (LCHE)

Established in 2010, the Louisiana Center for Health Equity (LCHE) works to address disparities in health and healthcare and is at the forefront of actions to reduce the pervasive health inequities in Louisiana. LCHE is a statewide 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonpartisan organization dedicated to fostering health equity in Louisiana.

About Campaign to Establish Louisiana Office on Women’s Health

The Campaign to Establish the Louisiana Office of Women’s Health, organized by the Louisiana Center for Health Equity, is an effort designed to concentrate resources and policy efforts toward improving health outcomes and eliminating disparities unique to women, especially

pertaining to maternal health. The Campaign is made up of 50+ partner organizations that serve as a cohesive voice and organized movement to advocate for better health outcomes for women and their families.

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