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# New Directions New Orleans: Toward a Health-Based Approach to Drug Policy

Thursday  
April 2, 2015

8:30am Registration  
9:00am Opening  
4:45pm Closing Remarks

Georges Auditorium  
Dillard University  
New Orleans

Hosted by the Louisiana Public Health Institute,  
Dillard University School of Public Health,  
and the Drug Policy Alliance

[lphi.org](http://lphi.org) | [dillard.edu](http://dillard.edu) | [drugpolicy.org](http://drugpolicy.org)

Co-sponsored by:



## Welcome

The Louisiana Public Health Institute, Dillard University School of Public Health, and the Drug Policy Alliance welcome you to New Directions New Orleans, a one-day convening of public health practitioners, criminal justice advocates, policymakers, public safety professionals, and community advocates who will participate in a discussion on how drugs and the drug war affect young people, families, and communities – and invite you to a dialogue about fresh approaches to drug policy and mass incarceration.

Today we will envision a coordinated, comprehensive approach that balances public safety and health. Tomorrow we will work together to create safer, healthier communities, and measure our success by the impact of both drug use and drug policies on the public's health.



Joseph Kimbrell, MA, MSW,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Louisiana Public Health Institute



Ethan Nadelmann,  
Executive Director,  
Drug Policy Alliance

## Conference Program

8:30 am – 9:00 am

### **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

9:00 am – 9:15 am

### **Welcoming Remarks**

- **Joseph Kimbrell, MA, MSW**,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Louisiana Public Health Institute
- **Dr. Wodajo Wieldaregay**,  
Chair & Associate Professor,  
School of Public Health,  
Dillard University
- **Ethan Nadelmann**,  
Executive Director,  
Drug Policy Alliance

9:15 am – 9:25 am

### **U.S. Attorney Kenneth Polite**

9:30 am – 10:30 am

### **Opening Panel**

### **Envisioning New Marijuana Policies in Louisiana: Making a Case for Sensible Reform**

Louisiana has some of the harshest penalties for marijuana in the country, and some of the starkest racial disparities in arrest, prosecution, and incarceration. Panelists will discuss ways to end the unequal enforcement of Louisiana's marijuana laws and ways to ensure sensible reform.

*Moderator: Sabrina Wilson,  
Reporter, WVUE*

- **Sen. J.P. Morrell**,  
Louisiana State Senate, District 3
- **Susan Guidry**, New Orleans  
City Councilmember, District A
- **Kevin Kane**, President,  
Pelican Institute for Public Policy
- **Marjorie Esman**, Executive Director,  
ACLU of Louisiana

10:30 am – 11:30 am

**Panel Two**

**Drug Laws, Incarceration, and Sentencing Reform in Louisiana**

The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, and Louisiana has highest incarceration rate of any state in the U.S. Panelists will explore innovative approaches to improving public safety and identify ways to engage policymakers in rethinking the excessively punitive policies that do more harm than good.

*Moderator: Heath Allen, Anchor, WSDU TV*

- **The Honorable Calvin Johnson**, Retired Judge, Criminal Court, New Orleans
- **Rep. Joe Lopinto**, Louisiana House of Representatives, Metairie, Chair of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice
- **Derwyn Bunton**, Chief Public Defender, Orleans Public Defenders
- **Judge Fredericka Homberg Wicker**, Louisiana 5th Circuit Court of Appeal
- **Rep. Terry Landry**, (invited) Louisiana House of Representatives, Lafayette, former Superintendent, Louisiana State Police

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

**Panel Three**

**Effective Strategies for Addressing Problematic Drug Use in Louisiana**

Millions of dollars are spent each year addressing drug use through the criminal justice system, but evidence suggests this approach is misguided. Panelists will discuss how to address problematic drug use through health systems, and point to innovative strategies that can save lives, preserve families and communities, and save tax dollars.

*Moderator: Laura McTighe, Women With A Vision*

- **Thomas J. Donovan**, State Attorney, Chittenden, Vermont
- **Danita Muse**, Retired Social Worker and Public Health Practitioner
- **Laura Thomas**, Deputy State Director, California, Drug Policy Alliance
- **Shaquita Borden**, Director of Research and Evaluation, Women With A Vision
- **Daniel Abrahamson**, Director, Office of Legal Affairs, Drug Policy Alliance
- **The Honorable Calvin Johnson**, Retired Judge, Criminal Court, New Orleans

12:30 pm – 12:40 pm

**Lunch Provided**

12:40 pm – 1:00 pm

**Keynote Speaker**

**Dr. Carl Hart**

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology and Psychiatry, Columbia University, author, *High Price*

1:00 pm – 1:35 pm

**Book Signing**

with Dr. Carl Hart

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm

**Panel Four**

**Louisiana's War on Drugs, the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and Juvenile Justice**

It is not a coincidence that Louisiana ranks near the bottom in high school graduation rates and has the highest incarceration rates in the United States. Louisiana's children are being pushed into incarceration as a result of zero-tolerance policies in schools. Panelists will explore how the drug war in Louisiana is fueling the school-to-prison pipeline, and the strategies to disrupt it.

*Moderator: Jarvis Deberry, nola.com/Times Picayune*

- **Janel George**, NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- **Ashana Bigard**, Community Education Project of New Orleans & Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children Member
- **Jason Williams**, City Councilmember-at-Large, New Orleans City Council
- **Dr. Cheryl Grills**, Psychologist, Loyola-Marymount University

2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

**Break**

*(Program continues next page)*

# Conference Program

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

## Panel Five

### Effective Strategies for Reducing Incarceration and Promoting a Health-Based Approach to Drug Use

Criminal justice and drug policy reforms are advancing in cities and states across the country. Panelists will share lessons from their respective states and nationally, and discuss successful strategies that can be replicated in Louisiana as policymakers and advocates explore ways to reduce incarceration and develop sensible drug laws.

*Moderator: Gregory Thompson, Attorney and Sentencing Reform Activist*

- **Roseanne Scotti**, State Director, New Jersey, Drug Policy Alliance
- **Ana Yanez Correa**, Executive Director, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition
- **Dave Mickenberg**, Lobbyist, Vermont
- **Craig DeRoche**, Prison Justice Fellowship
- **Nicole Porter**, Director of Advocacy, The Sentencing Project
- **Mike Carpenter**, Operational Audit Group, Oklahoma Department of Corrections

4:00 pm – 4:45 pm

## Closing Panel

### Where Do We Go From Here? Next Steps

This session will recap the key highlights of the day, discuss feasible lessons from outside of Louisiana, and explore strategies for moving forward.

*Moderator: Asha Bandele, Director, Advocacy Grants Program, Drug Policy Alliance*

- **Deon Haywood**, Executive Director, Women With A Vision
- **Norris Henderson**, Executive Director, Voice of The Ex-Offender
- **Gregory Thompson**, Attorney and Sentencing Reform Activist
- **Gina Womack**, Executive Director, Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
- **Rev. Dr. Patrick Keen**, Pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, New Orleans

4:45 pm – 5:00 pm

## Closing Remarks

- **Ethan Nadelmann**, Executive Director, Drug Policy Alliance

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## Co-Sponsors



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## Partnering Organizations

National Association of Social Workers – Louisiana State Chapter  
Louisiana State NAACP  
Orleans Parish Place Matters