

FIRST LADY
Donna Hutto Edwards
STATE OF LOUISIANA



May 16, 2018

Dear Friends,

Although I cannot be with you today, I stand shoulder to shoulder with all of you as you shine light on the importance of the women of our great state making their health and living a healthy lifestyle a top priority. In our state, women make up half of the population, 55 percent of registered voters and lead the majority of single parent households. This issue is not only important to me as the First Lady of Louisiana but also to our Governor, which is why he has proclaimed today as Women's Health Day in Louisiana. As he has stated, "Women's health remains a priority for families, communities and government, and our commitment to keeping women healthy remains stronger than ever."

In addition, John Bel adopted Medicaid expansion upon taking office, which has enabled more than 475,000 women and men, the majority of whom are working, to have health coverage, some for the first time, and most importantly, improved health overall. In fact, under expansion more than 41,000 women have been screened for breast cancer and nearly 400 have been diagnosed and are receiving treatment. Expansion is saving lives.

Together, we continue to fight for raising the minimum wage and closing the gender wage gap so that women earn equal pay for equal work. A March 2018 study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research ranked Louisiana 48th in the nation for female employment and earnings, but according to the 2018 America's Health Rankings report, the percentage of uninsured middle-aged women has decreased by 34 percent since 2016. We know that when women succeed, children succeed and families succeed.

Women are caretakers and often, we can get so busy taking care of our families, friends and work that we forget to take care of ourselves. As someone once said, the greatest wealth is health. The better we take care of ourselves, the better we can take care of others. Keep up the good work, and let's continue to encourage one another and spread the word.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna H. Edwards".

Donna H. Edwards
First Lady