

# Tips for Writing to Advocate for Louisiana Treatment Funding



Thank you for your interest in advocating to keep funding for eating disorder treatment in Louisiana! Your voice CAN make a difference in the fight against eating disorders.

Funding to pay for a nationally renowned eating disorder physician at Moss Regional Hospital in Lake Charles has been cut; his services provided essential treatment, not available anywhere else in the state. In the absence of this funding, many eating disorder patients from around the state will be left with no care, and Louisiana is likely to see a spike in rates of untreated eating disorders, as well as increased numbers of serious health consequences that accompany prolonged eating disorders among those untreated.

Educating policy makers about an issue, then motivating them to help you achieve it, is the definition of lobbying, and is the foundation of our political system. **It is up to all of us to educate them about the impact of eating disorders**, because **you have the expertise and experience** about eating disorders that decision makers may lack. Writing a letter, or an email, is an easy way to use your voice to educate policy makers.

Here are some tips on writing a powerful and effective letter/email.

➤ **Find your target audience.**

Funding for hospital positions, like this, is decided by the Department of Health and Hospitals in Baton Rouge. You can contact Secretary Bruce Greenstein via email at [dhhinfo@la.gov](mailto:dhhinfo@la.gov), or mail to: Department of Health & Hospitals, P. O. Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

➤ **Use the template.**

The template below can serve as a guide for format and can help you structure your argument.

➤ **Make it personal.**

Edit the template as you feel appropriate; personalize it. Add your own experience and story to capture attention.

➤ **Stay focused and brief.**

While your story is important, also be sure to keep the message really simple and direct. Tell him, up front, why you are writing and what you want. Educate him about why it is important.

**Letter/Email Template:**

[DATE]

Secretary Bruce Greenstein  
Department of Health & Hospitals  
P. O. Box 629  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Dear Secretary Greenstein:

**I am writing to ask you to reinstate funding for an eating disorder physician position at Moss Regional Hospital.** It has come to my attention that this funding, which has allowed for a nationally recognized eating disorder physician to treat Louisiana patients, has been cut. He has been the sole provider of necessary care for many Louisianans. In the absence of this funding, many eating disorder patients will be left with no care, as patients suffering from these deadly illnesses require specialized treatment.

If the funding is not re-instated, Louisiana is likely to see a spike in rates of untreated eating disorders, as well as increased numbers of serious health consequences that accompany prolonged eating disorders among those untreated.

- An estimated 24 million Americans suffer from eating disorders including anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder.
- The mortality rate from eating disorders for females age 15 - 24 is 12 times higher than the mortality rate of all other causes of death for this population.
- Without treatment, up to twenty percent (20%) of people with serious eating disorders die. With treatment, that number falls to two to three percent (2-3%)
- If left untreated, eating disorders can damage the brain, liver, kidneys, heart, GI tract, bones, teeth, skin and hair. They can result in serious medical conditions, such as osteoporosis, retarded growth, kidney problems, ulcers and heart failure.

Eating disorders are unique conditions, due to the fact that they are mental health conditions that manifest in physical health symptoms. Patients require treatment by physicians, and mental health providers, who are specialists. Studies conducted in Florida found that 79.38% of physicians reported that they were not adequately trained to be able to treat, assess or diagnose eating disorders; the National Eating Disorders Association reports that this trend is nationwide: most physicians are not equipped to treat eating disorders. Funding for a specialized eating disorder physician at Moss Regional Hospital is critical in the lives of many, from all over the state—it can prevent long term, chronic conditions, ultimately **saving individuals, families, and the state money. It may even save lives.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I urge you to vote to promote the health of Louisiana's residents; reduce the numbers of serious eating disorders in our state. **Reinstate the funding for an eating disorder physician position at Moss Regional Hospital.**

Sincerely,

[Name]  
[Address]