



INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum (Quality Forum) is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to lead evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of Louisiana citizens. The Quality Forum was born out of recommendations of the Louisiana Health Care Redesign Collaborative, which was tasked with addressing health care issues in Louisiana after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Supported by a 2006 resolution of the Louisiana State Legislature and organized through the efforts of more than 40 health care and consumer organizations, the Quality Forum has since positioned itself as a leading resource for initiatives designed to improve the quality of health care in Louisiana.

The Quality Forum Board of Directors hired its first executive director, Shannon Robshaw in January 2008 and additional staff members in the following months. The Quality Forum staff, board and committee members began implementing the mission of the organization and achieved major successes throughout 2008.

The Quality Forum is committed to providing the public the most thoughtful and progressive leadership and resources on health improvement through the guidance of its highly skilled volunteer board, committees and subcommittees. These professional volunteers represent a cross section of business leaders, patient advocates, providers, physicians, and insurers in the state. The Quality Forum members include some of Louisiana's leading health care industry professionals and have donated more than 2,550 hours toward improving the quality of health care delivery in the state. The Quality Forum's evidence-based approach and superior level of expertise brought by the Quality Forum board and committee members are being leveraged to achieve meaningful improvement in health for all Louisiana residents. As a result, the work of the Quality Forum has been honored on the national level and has brought national attention to the reform efforts taking place in Louisiana.

With dozens of volunteer stakeholders working in committees focused on health information technology, quality measurement, patient-centered medical homes and outreach and education, the Quality Forum set a clear agenda for health improvement and is actively working to achieve greater value in health care.

The Quality Forum's Medical Home Committee is providing peer-learning opportunities to practices in transforming to patient-centered medical homes.

As a result of the efforts of the Quality Forum in gaining stakeholder consensus on the value of the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model, Governor Jindal and the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) has included the PCMH model as a core component of Medicaid reform.

In addition, the Quality Forum hosted two Summits: one on Patient-Centered Medical Homes and the second on Transforming the Health System through Health Information Technology and Exchange. Both Summits reached more than 150 people and featured state and national speakers.

The Quality Forum has assisted DHH in developing recommendations on the implementation of a statewide health information exchange (LaHIE) by convening major stakeholders including physicians, hospitals, health systems, consumers and others to produce the requested strategy.

Soon after the Quality Forum's staff was hired, the group was nationally recognized as a Charted Value Exchange by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which is the centerpiece of the HHS Value-Driven Health Care Initiative. That initiative seeks to improve the quality and value of health care services by providing public information used by patients, purchasers and others to make health care decisions. This distinction positioned the organization as a valuable resource in Louisiana's health care reform movement.

During the summer of 2008, the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) notified Louisiana officials of the state's selection as one of only 12 sites nationwide for the department's Electronic Health Records Demonstration Project. The Quality Forum was responsible for drafting and submitting the grant proposal on behalf of the state, which will bring up to \$29 million in reimbursements for participating physician practices. In addition, the organization is a community partner and assisted CMS with recruiting the 200 physician practices needed for the project.

Recently, the Quality Forum's Executive Director Shannon Robshaw was acknowledged for her leadership in health care with an appointment to the nationally recognized Quality Alliance Steering Committee (QASC), where she was designated as co-chair of its National Regional Alignment Workgroup. The QASC is a national, collaborative effort among government agencies, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, hospitals, health insurers, employers, consumers, accrediting agencies, foundations and others. The organization's mission is to advance a high-quality, affordable, patient-centered health care system through the coordination of various groups working to provide public information on health care providers' performance. Robshaw's designation continues to place Louisiana in the national spotlight for its efforts in improving health care quality.

A primary objective of the organization is to serve as a repository of information on health care initiatives taking place across the state and nation. A primary vehicle for this information is the Quality Forum's web site – www.lhcqf.org, which launched in January 2008 and highlights the work of the Quality Forum, its committees and other stakeholders.

In November 2008, the Quality Forum designed and launched the Quality Measurement Analysis Portal (Quality MAP), which elevated Louisiana's standards for quality

measurement of medical information. The Quality MAP is one of the first of its kind nationally and will serve to provide baseline data against which the effectiveness of future system changes can be assessed. Its goal is for the data to be used to help identify targeted areas for improvement and lead to better health outcomes for Louisiana citizens. This data will dramatically facilitate improvements in the cost and quality of care in Louisiana. The Quality MAP can be found at www.lhcqf.org.

SUMMARY

Among the key activities completed this past year:

- Drafting the grant that secured Louisiana as one of only 12 sites chosen by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for its Electronic Health Records Demonstration Project, which will bring up to \$29 million in reimbursements for participating physician practices.
- Promoting and assisting the implementation of patient-centered medical homes, including securing Gov. Bobby Jindal and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals' (DHH) inclusion of the patient-centered medical home as a core component of Medicaid reform.
- Establishing itself as a reliable resource for the state and other health care professionals on health information technology and exchange (HIT/HIE), including convening major stakeholders in HIT/HIE to develop recommendations for DHH on the implementation of a statewide health information exchange or LaHIE.
- Being one of the first 14 inaugural organizations nationwide designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a "Chartered Value Exchange," which is the centerpiece of the HHS Value-Driven Health Care Initiative. That initiative seeks to improve the quality and value of health care services by providing public information used by patients, purchasers and others to make health care decisions.
- Placing Executive Director Shannon Robshaw on the nationally recognized Quality Alliance Steering Committee and as co-chair of its National Regional Alignment Workgroup.
- Developing and launching the Quality Forum web site – www.lhcqf.org, which includes the Quality Measurement Analysis Portal, the first of its kind nationally. It will be used to help identify targeted areas for improvement and lead to better health outcomes for Louisiana citizens.

ESTABLISHING THE QUALITY FORUM AS A VALUABLE RESOURCE TO STATE OFFICIALS AND HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

The Quality Forum is committed to providing the public the most thoughtful and progressive research and resources on health care through its highly respected volunteer board, committees and subcommittees. The Quality Forum members are some of Louisiana's leading health care industry professionals, which have donated more than **2,550 hours** toward improving the quality of health care delivery in the state. The high standard of research and superior level of expertise brought by the Quality Forum board and committee members ensure the most meaningful health outcomes for all Louisiana residents.

By focusing its efforts on four core areas – patient-centered medical homes, quality measurement, health information technology and exchange, and outreach and education – the organization hopes to provide practical and applicable recommendations to meet the growing challenges faced in health care today. Each of the four committees is tasked with drafting a white paper to address the core needs of their subject matter and compiling materials to act as a resource and guide to implement recommended changes. These materials are instrumental to those working toward reform in Louisiana.

In addition, the Quality Forum gathers leading experts and professionals to take part in its summit program by participating in panel discussions and giving presentations on important health care initiatives. The summit program occurs twice yearly, in the spring and in the fall, and brings together more than 150 attendees at each event. Summit topics highlight important and innovative movements taking place in health care in the state. The 2008 Spring Summit's topic was the patient-centered medical home, while the 2008 Fall Summit focused on health information technology and exchange. The 2009 summit program will feature the remaining two core areas – quality measurement and employer outreach and education.

Focusing reform measures on four core areas has allowed the Quality Forum to be effective in its research and approach. Recruiting leading experts in each field to serve on the four committees has ensured the highest level of standards. The integrity of work is unparalleled. State officials and health care industry professionals have referred to the Quality Forum for input and guidance on many of these core areas. Components of its patient-centered medical home model can be found in similar proposed models from DHH. Quality Forum staff and board members have been regular participants in high-level discussions on health care reform as the state of Louisiana works to redesign its health care system.

Below are specific details on the work being done by the Quality Forum's patient-centered medical home and health information technology and exchange committees.

PATIENT-CENTERED MEDICAL HOMES

In March 2008, the Quality Forum's Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse the Joint Principles of a Patient-Centered Medical Home and the National Committee for Quality Assurance Guidelines for the Patient-Centered Medical Home, becoming the first statewide multi-stakeholder collaborative to do so. With this action, the Quality Forum called for commitment by providers and systems statewide, both public and private, to lead the redesign of delivery systems to support patient-centered, coordinated care for the improvement in quality and health outcomes.

The Quality Forum established the Medical Home committee, consisting of researchers, providers, administrators, policy makers, consumers and stakeholder advisors and chaired by Karen DeSalvo, MD, MPH, MSc. The committee was charged to "convene the state's major healthcare stakeholders for the purpose of developing and accelerating the adoption of standard components and criteria for the delivery of health care services via the patient-centered medical home system of care."

The Quality Forum and its Medical Home Committee hosted a spring summit on patient-centered medical home, which brought together 150 leading experts and health care professionals from Louisiana and across the country to discuss programs and other trends occurring with the development of medical home models. In addition, the committee released its white paper and resource tool kit during the summit.

The white paper and the Implementation Resource Tool Kit for the Patient-Centered Medical Home are structured resource repositories of information intended for use by primary care practices in implementing the Patient-Centered Medical Home. The materials in this tool kit are meant to be practical supports for those either in the process of or contemplating implementation of the medical home model of care. The tool kit was developed to help those who are at the grass roots level with understanding what a medical home is, how it is implemented and mechanisms for action. It is considered a "first edition." As the patient-centered medical home model is implemented throughout Louisiana, assessments and lessons learned from these projects will be included in future editions.

In addition, the Quality Forum's Medical Home Committee is working with several service delivery redesign projects in Louisiana that illustrate various stages of development of the medical home model.

Most recently, Governor Jindal and the DHH adopted the National Committee for Quality Assurance's certified medical home as a core component of Medicaid reform in the state.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND EXCHANGE

The board of the Quality Forum understood that a need remains for a coordinated information sharing system and tools to facilitate high quality care, in both crises and everyday situations, for our population. It understood that the bedrock of such a system rests in health information technology (HIT) and exchange (HIE), which allows information to be gathered, analyzed, shared, and used on all levels of care. More importantly, HIT tools are critical for improving quality of care, especially providers at the point-of-care delivery.

The board organized the HIT Committee under the leadership of chair Eric Taylor to promote a common health information management and technology vision for the state, which supports the implementation of patient-centered medical homes, patient and health care purchaser empowerment, transparency in health care quality and price, and the implementation of targeted population health interventions. The Quality Forum's HIT Committee convened many state health care stakeholders to work toward the adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and other clinical information and decision support systems at the provider level. The Quality Forum and HIT Committee hosted the 2008 Fall Summit, which brought together nearly 200 health care professionals from across the state and nation to discuss initiatives surrounding health information technology and exchange.

During the summit, the committee released its white paper that demonstrated the need for a common system to facilitate secure and appropriate health information exchange with all providers that could improve communication, accuracy and use of patient health information in Louisiana. In addition, the committee created a toolkit that supports and promotes the adoption of best practice health information management and technology with providers. The toolkit includes common, evidence-supported definitions and features of an EHR, including key differences from an electronic medical record; explanation of the difference between the two primary EHR models (Application Service Providers vs. locally hosted); breakdown of the potential costs, benefits and advantages of EHR adoption; and selected resources to assist providers in practice readiness and assessment, financial considerations, and software and vendor evaluation.

In addition, the Quality Forum was asked by DHH to convene major stakeholders in health information technology to develop recommendations to the department on the implementation of a statewide health information exchange or LaHIE. The group was tasked with developing these recommendations consistent with DHH's business objective, which is "to establish a common facility to exchange patient health information for the purpose of improving quality."

DESIGNATION AS CHARTERED VALUE EXCHANGE

In February 2008, the Quality Forum was one of the first 14 inaugural organizations nationwide to be designated by HHS as a “Chartered Value Exchange,” which is the centerpiece of the HHS Value-Driven Health Care Initiative. That initiative seeks to improve the quality and value of health care services by providing public information used by patients, purchasers and others to make health care decisions.

As a Chartered Value Exchange, the Quality Forum has access to performance measurement information from Medicare that can be combined with private-sector data to provide a complete picture of health quality in the state. The Quality Forum also participates in the nationwide Learning Network to facilitate peer-to-peer learning experiences.

HHS Secretary Michael O. Leavitt complimented the Quality Forum, saying that the organizations chosen “are at the forefront of a nationwide movement to transform our current health care sector into a patient-focused marketplace.” HHS stated in a press release that organizations such as the Quality Forum that promote local public-private collaborations are essential to the success of HHS’s efforts.

LOUISIANA’S SELECTION FOR CMS ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

In June 2008, HHS Secretary Michael O. Leavitt joined Gov. Bobby Jindal, DHH Secretary Alan Levine and Quality Forum Executive Director Shannon Robshaw to announce Louisiana’s selection as one of only 12 sites nationwide to implement a five-year CMS Electronic Health Demonstration Project that encourages small to medium-sized primary care physician practices to use electronic health records (EHR) to improve the quality of patient care.

The Quality Forum developed and submitted the state’s grant application for the CMS EHR Demonstration Project and serves as a community partner on the project. The Quality Forum has assisted CMS with recruiting more than 200 eligible physician practices and will coordinate Louisiana stakeholders to assist the participating practices with EHR adoption and quality measurement.

The program was designed to recruit 200 primary care physician practices from each site. One hundred practices will be randomly placed into the control group and the other 100 practices will be placed into the participating group with enhanced CMS reimbursement. Both groups will receive support from Louisiana stakeholders organized by the Quality Forum during the five-year period for technical assistance in adopting EHR and quality improvement recognition.

After the first two years of the program, the 100 participating physician practices must begin using a Certification Commission for Healthcare Information

Technology-certified EHR to perform specific minimum core functionalities, including clinical documentation, ordering and recording lab results and recording prescriptions. Additional CMS incentive payments can be earned for more sophisticated health information technology use, achieving higher scores on a “CMS Office Systems Survey,” and the practice’s use of EHR functionalities to change and improve the way it operates.

Practices that have not implemented a certified EHR or do not meet the minimum functional use requirements by the end of the second year will be terminated from the demonstration project.

During years three through five, incentive payments to the practices will be based on actual performance on the clinical quality measures. Total CMS payments received under the project may be up to \$58,000 per physician or \$290,000 per practice. The total amount of potential reimbursements during the project timeframe is \$29 million.

Although the Quality Forum does not receive payment for its work or the work of the stakeholders during the course of this project, the organization is committed to the project’s success. The Quality Forum shares in the CMS’s belief that electronic health records are beneficial to both patients and physicians and result in fewer medical errors, adverse drug events and redundant tests and medical procedures. Additional benefits of EHR include faster diagnoses and treatment, timely preventive care, better communications between physicians and patients, shorter wait times and lower costs, all of which serve to enhance the quality of care for Louisiana residents.

SELECTION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHANNON ROBshaw TO QUALITY ALLIANCE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Quality Alliance Steering Committee (QASC) is a national, collaborative effort among government agencies, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, hospitals, health insurers, employers, consumers, accrediting agencies, foundations and others. The organization’s vision is to advance a high-quality, affordable, patient-centered health care system through the coordination of various groups working to provide public information on health care providers’ performance.

The QASC actively supports the implementation and use of effective health care performance information for public reporting and more informed consumer decision-making; performance improvement by providers; and effective public policies, payment policies, and consumer incentives that reward or foster better provider performance.

In addition, Robshaw was selected as the co-chair of the National Regional Alignment Workgroup (Workgroup). This Workgroup is tasked with aligning national and regional health care performance measure implementation and improvement efforts to maximize their

collective impact. Under Robshaw's leadership, the Workgroup is focusing on objectives to achieve its goals including increasing the ability of regional improvement initiatives to act on information improving health care quality and outcomes, identifying means to expand and sustain locally focused quality improvement initiatives around the country and informing national initiatives in priority setting, standard development, and technological support of the lessons learned from local improvement efforts.

Robshaw's work with the QASC will continue to enhance efforts being performed by the Quality Forum on the state level as well as promote the significant health care reform initiatives being conducted in Louisiana.

DEVELOPMENT OF LHCQF WEB SITE

One of the Quality Forum's primary objectives was to develop a comprehensive web site, www.lhcqf.org that could act as a repository of information on health care related topics. The site is a primary vehicle in communicating the research, recommendations and initiatives of the organization and its stakeholders. The site is available to the public and includes information on the work being performed by the Quality Forum's four committees; videos and presentations from the summits; news articles; links; Quality Measurement Analysis Portal; and other health care related resources.

The web site remains dynamic with more information added continuously. The Quality Forum remains committed to releasing evidence-based information that will help in advancing its mission to bring quality health care to all residents in Louisiana.

DEVELOPMENT AND LAUNCH OF QUALITY MEASUREMENT ANALYSIS PORTAL

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum unveiled a health care database on its web site called the Quality Measurement Analysis Portal (Quality MAP) in November 2008. The Quality MAP is one of the first of its kind in the country, and its goal is for the data to be used to help identify targeted areas for improvement that lead to better health outcomes for Louisiana citizens. This data will dramatically facilitate improvements in the cost and quality of care in Louisiana.

The Quality MAP is a data warehouse that contains de-identified claims information from 2005 for 2.3 million Louisiana residents, including Medicare and Medicaid recipients and those privately insured through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana. Quality MAP users can find information on a variety of national quality measures, utilization of services and costs of care, subdivided by geographic region or patient demographic. The Quality MAP will provide baseline data against which the effectiveness of future system changes can be assessed.

Through a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Louisiana and with support from Tulane University, Health Dialog created the data warehouse by aggregating 2005 data from the different payers and conducting analyses that provide the foundation for the data tables found in the Quality MAP. Health Dialog continues to support the Quality Forum in its effort to update and expand the data warehouse with more recent data from 2006 and 2007.

PATH FORWARD

The Quality Forum's first years of operation proved highly successful with many major accomplishments to benefit the health care system in Louisiana. However, its work is just beginning. The organization has set out additional goals for 2009 that will build upon the successes of 2008. With continued support from its board of directors, committee members and additional stakeholders, the staff of the Quality Forum will continue to work to fulfill its mission to lead evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of Louisiana citizens.

Projects identified by the Quality Forum as priorities in 2009 include:

- **Updating the Quality MAP with additional years of data and recruiting more health plans to volunteer their declassified information to the data warehouse and researching ways to integrate clinical data.**
- **Supporting the physician practices selected to participate in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Electronic Health Records Demonstration Project.**
- **Holding summit programs on Quality Measurement and Employer Outreach and Education on Patient-Centered Medical Homes.**
- **Creating a regularly updated inventory of HIT projects.**
- **Supporting quality improvement initiatives by providers – possibly through a web-based disease registry with embedded clinical guidelines.**
- **Continue educating and assisting practices with transitioning to a patient-centered medical home model of care.**
- **Developing a model private insurance contract and benefits package to pilot implementation of the medical home in the private sector through employer sponsored insurance.**
- **Conducting a community scan regarding health literacy and patient support needs in the Alexandria area, followed by targeted health literacy activities.**
- **Continue providing information and resources to DHH on its health care/Medicaid reform efforts.**

LHCQF ORGANIZATION

OFFICERS

President: Michael O. Fleming, MD, FAAFP is a Family Medicine physician and past president of both the Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians and the American Academy of Family Physicians

Vice-President: Julia Ann Adams Kenny, BS is Director of Policy for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Secretary/Treasurer: Linda Gage-White, MD, PhD, MBA is a practicing Otolaryngologist and a Clinical Professor of Otolaryngology and Pediatrics at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Shreveport

BOARD MEMBERS

- Gery Barry, MS, FSA, Chief Strategy Officer, Aetna
- Yakima Black, MS, Executive Director of Mental Health America of Louisiana
- William F. Borne, RN, Founder, Chairman of the Board, and CEO of Amedisys, Inc
- Frederick P. Cerise, MD, MPH, Louisiana State University System Vice President for Health Affairs and Medical Education
- Karen Bollinger DeSalvo, MD, MPH, MSc, Vice Dean, Community Affairs and Health Policy and Executive Director of the Tulane University Community Health Center at Covenant House
- Frannie R. Kronenberg, MD, MSc, Director, Ambulatory Quality, Ochsner Health System
- Stephanie Mills, MD, MHCM, Chief Information Officer and Chief Medical Information Officer for the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System
- Raymond A. Peters, SPHR, Vice President of Human Resources for Roy O. Martin Lumber Company in Alexandria, Louisiana
- Eric B. Taylor, MS, President of the Louisiana Primary Care Association and CEO of the Southwest Louisiana Center for Health Services

STAFF

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For more information about the Quality Forum
please visit www.lhcqf.org.

