



Bruce D. Greenstein
Secretary

CONTACT

Linda Morgan

LHCQF Marketing/Communications Director
(225) 300-4824 or (504) 473-6861 (cell)

lmorgan@lhcf.org

Lisa R. Faust

DHH Director of Media and Communications
(225) 342-7913 or (225) 252-3579 (cell)

lisa.faust@la.gov

Feb. 11, 2011

Louisiana Receives Federal Approval of Health Information Exchange Plan

BATON ROUGE – Louisiana’s effort to significantly enhance the use of electronic health records took a major step forward today with final approval of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum’s Strategic and Operational Plan to develop a statewide health information network. The plans were approved by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology in Washington, D.C. The approval allows the state to access remaining grant funds to build the network, known as the Louisiana Health Information Exchange (LaHIE).

LaHIE is the state’s mechanism for allowing for the secure exchange of health information among health care providers and across the state’s health care system. The network will increase connectivity and enable patient-centered information flow to improve the quality and effectiveness of care. Benefits of LaHIE include timely access to patient health records, improved patient safety, increased security of records, increased consumer engagement, reduced health care costs and the ability to more adequately measure and improve public health benchmarks.

“I commend all of the stakeholders who took part in crafting the plan because it was a collaborative effort,” commented Cindy Munn, executive director of the Quality Forum, the entity designated by the state Department of Health and Hospitals to lead planning and implementation of health information technology grants. “We’re very proud of Louisiana’s proposed exchange—this represents a critical step toward implementation of LaHIE,” she added.

LaHIE will also be designed to ensure that health care providers can use electronic health records (EHRs) and other health information technologies to meet federal criteria for incentive programs through Medicare and Medicaid.

“Enhancing the use of health information technology in Louisiana continues to be one of the hallmarks of our administration,” said DHH Secretary Bruce D. Greenstein, who has recently been invited to serve on the ONC Health Information Technology Policy Committee for the Office of the National Coordinator. “The approval of this plan is emblematic of the hard work done by the State of Louisiana, the Quality Forum and many stakeholders, and they are to be congratulated. Together, we see a day when Louisiana’s health care providers can use technology with ease to ensure higher levels of patient safety, and greater efficiency – this will ultimately lead to greater health outcomes.”

In March 2010, the Quality Forum received a \$10.6 million federal grant through the State HIE Cooperative Agreement. Initial funds were provided for strategic planning sessions and research activities with stakeholders from

across the state. The results were used to develop the plan, which was submitted to ONC in August 2010 for initial review. The remainder of the grant was contingent upon federal approval of the plan.

The approved plan is available at www.lhcqf.org.

About the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum

The Louisiana Health Care 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 serves as the State-Designated Entity to lead the planning and implementation of the health information technology grants contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. For more information, please visit www.lhcqf.org.

About the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's blog at www.myhealthla.org, Twitter at http://twitter.com/La_Health_Dept and search for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals on Facebook.

-end-