



LOUISIANA
HEALTH CARE
QUALITY FORUM

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

LOUISIANA HEALTH CARE QUALITY FORUM RECOGNIZED AS LEADER IN ADVANCING THE USE OF HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

BATON ROUGE, LA – (Oct. 22, 2012) – The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum and the Louisiana Health Information Exchange (LaHIE) have been recognized by the federal government as national leaders for their efforts to enhance the safety and quality of health care by embracing the use of health information technology.

Despite the near-universal use of electronic and automated processes across many industries—including banking, shopping, communication, news and entertainment—America’s medical system has remained stuck in the past, with doctors, pharmacies and hospitals often relying upon paper records. As a result, the different health care providers who treat a single patient (primary care physician, cardiologist, and dermatologist, for example) rarely have access to the same medical history, which makes diagnoses and developing treatment plans for that patient more difficult. Use of paper records can also undermine effective coordination of care among a patient and all of his/her care providers since health care officials have to copy and fax or mail the needed information to each other.

The Quality Forum and LaHIE are working to help Louisiana’s health care providers, hospitals and pharmacies adopt and implement technologies that allow them to communicate securely and electronically, in real time. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology is specifically recognizing Louisiana’s efforts because of the increasing number of pharmacies utilizing e-prescribing capabilities as well as the growing number of health care providers who are actively and electronically sharing patient care summaries.

“As the state-designated entity for the development of both the health information exchange and the regional extension center in Louisiana, we are in a unique position to guide providers from the adoption of electronic health records to the robust exchange of health information,” said Nadine Robin, Health Information Technology Program Manager for the Quality Forum. “Our successes in promoting e-prescribing and the sharing of care summaries among health care providers will ensure better care coordination, which ultimately benefits Louisiana’s residents.”

“We’re so proud of our collaborative relationship with the Quality Forum, and we congratulate them on this honor,” said Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Secretary Bruce D. Greenstein. “Together,
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we continue to identify ways to apply the latest innovations in technology to medical practices, which enhances patient safety, reduces administrative burdens and leads to a more dynamic, cutting-edge system of health care delivery.”

“We’re pleased with the work being done to improve care of people throughout the state and are thrilled the effort is receiving national recognition,” said Cindy Munn, Executive Director of the Quality Forum. “Good communication among everyone involved in keeping a person healthy is vital to ensure good outcomes. Current technologies make it easy and safe for doctors, nurses, pharmacists and others to communicate with each other on their patients’ behalf. It results in fewer errors and means health care providers and their staff can spend more time actually talking with their patients. That’s what we’re working toward.”

About the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum is a private, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to advancing evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of Louisiana residents. Its focus areas include quality measurement and analytics, clinical quality improvement, the patient-centered medical home/care coordination model, Louisiana Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment (LaPOST), outreach/education and health information technology (IT). With regard to health IT, the Quality Forum is the State-Designated Entity to support health care providers and critical access/rural hospitals as they adopt and meaningfully use electronic health records and to lead the planning and implementation of the state’s health information exchange. For more information, visit www.lhcqf.org.

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