



LOUISIANA
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TO: Robert L. Marier, MD
FROM: Cindy Munn
RE: LHCQF Response – SR 81 Electronic Prescribing
DATE: November 18, 2011

On behalf of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, I am submitting comments related to Senate Resolution No. 81 to be included in the report of the Legislative Workgroup on Electronic Prescribing.

Established in 2007, the Forum is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of Louisiana residents. It is led and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that represents a cross-section of health care stakeholders including providers, payers, purchasers and consumers. Hundreds of other stakeholders provide expertise and guidance by volunteering their time and working together to ensure that the Forum serves as a key driver in transforming health care for all people in Louisiana.

Because efforts to improve health, enhance quality of care and reduce costs significantly impact all stakeholders, the Forum engages these groups in discussion, planning and implementation of changes. By understanding the value proposition from different stakeholder perspectives, the organization effectively encourages participation and develops relationships. To this end, the Forum has emerged as the trusted, neutral convener that facilitates collaboration among health care stakeholders in our state. The Forum's main areas of focus include quality measurement and analytics, clinical quality improvement, patient-centered medical home/care coordination, outreach/education and health information technology.

With regard to the latter initiative, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals named the Forum in 2009 as the state-designated entity to lead the planning and implementation of health information technology grants made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Since then, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), has awarded approximately \$18.3 million in grant funds to the Forum for two major efforts: 1) to serve as the Regional Extension Center (REC) for Louisiana and assist providers and hospitals as they transition to electronic health records and 2) to implement a statewide health information exchange for the state.

As Louisiana's REC, the Louisiana Health Information Technology (LHIT) Resource Center aims to assist providers and hospitals with the adoption, conversion and use of electronic health records (EHRs). Currently, the LHIT Resource Center is working with more than 1,200 providers and 19 critical access and rural hospitals as they become meaningful users of EHRs.



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The Louisiana Health Information Exchange, known as LaHIE, was launched in early November 2011. LaHIE is the mechanism that will allow for the secure exchange of health information among authorized providers and across Louisiana's health care system to help improve patient safety, quality of care and health outcomes. It is being piloted in the Acadiana region and will be rolled out statewide beginning in January 2012. To its credit, Louisiana is one of the first states in the country to accomplish this.

LaHIE recently developed a strategy for electronic prescribing for Louisiana that has been submitted to ONC. The strategy involves determining pharmacies in Louisiana that are not currently accepting electronic prescriptions and working with them to address barriers (e.g., cost, privacy of data, discoverability, accuracy of data, etc.). In addition, LaHIE staff members will conduct outreach for providers and hospitals to encourage electronic prescribing.

In closing, the Forum plays a vital role as Louisiana's "conduit" to ONC by serving as the state-designated entity for the LHIT Resource Center and LaHIE and by effectively convening multi-stakeholder groups. With this direct access, we can ensure that state-level issues and concerns related to health information technology, such as e-prescribing, receive national attention and are used to potentially shape national policy. Likewise, the Forum is empowered to communicate the latest information from the national health IT agenda within the state to facilitate alignment.

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum stands ready to work with members of the Legislative Workgroup on Electronic Prescribing to serve as the state's "gateway" to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology in all matters related to electronic prescribing.