



For Immediate Release

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Significant Improvements Made in Health Care for Louisiana's Medicare Beneficiaries

Louisiana health care providers to continue receiving quality improvement support

Baton Rouge, La., January 2, 2008- The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that it intends to renew a contract with Louisiana Health Care Review, Inc. (LHCR), for three more years because of the success the organization has had working with health care providers across the state to make dramatic improvements in the quality of care they deliver to Medicare beneficiaries (see chart below).

"We succeed when Louisiana health care providers succeed," said Gary Curtis, CEO of LHCR. "We are successful because Louisiana's providers have made real, measurable improvements in care that have improved the health and quality of life for Louisiana's Medicare beneficiaries."

LHCR works with hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and physician practices to improve care. The organization is evaluated on how much care improves statewide and also on how much it improves within a smaller group of providers with which LHCR works more intensively in each care setting.

Measure	Statewide Relative Improvement	Intensive Group Relative Improvement
Nursing Homes (2004-2007)		
% of residents with pressure sores	11%	22%
% of residents with physical restraints	29%	49%
% of long stay residents with pain	19%	30%
Home Health Agencies (2004-2007)		
Acute care hospitalization rate	-17.5%	41%
Improvements in bathing	9.9%	21%
Hospitals (2004 - 2007)		
Heart attack measures	21%	59%
Congestive heart failure measures	40%	66%
Pneumonia care measures	31%	55%
Other measures of appropriate care	29%	56%
Physician Practices (2004-2007)		
Adoption of information technology	Worked with 137 practices to select, install and operate electronic medical record systems.	

QIO data from CMS - improvement based on comparison across most recent two to three years of data.

Curtis said these results are particularly noteworthy because they have been achieved since August 2005.

"Not only have we achieved these truly transformational results in such a short period of time, but they are also proof that our providers kept their eye on the ball -- improving care for their patients -- even while they were having to rebuild in many cases from the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," he said.

LHCR's success on its current contract with CMS follows on the heels of similar success on its previous contract, which involved improving care in the same four health care settings, but on different indicators of the quality of care.

During that contract, LHCR and its provider partners achieved the greatest statewide improvement in the country on an array of measures covering outpatient care for diabetes and rates of mammography. The organization also achieved the greatest statewide increase in the country on rates of immunization against flu and pneumonia, accounting for an additional 30,000 flu shots and 42,000 pneumonia shots.

"We often hear about national health rankings that show Louisiana at the bottom of the list, but those rankings typically don't account for factors like education and poverty levels that are beyond the control of our health care providers," Curtis said. "Those rankings typically overlook the tremendous strides that are being made across the state."

CMS said in a letter to LHCR that the federal government's evaluation of LHCR's performance on its current contract shows LHCR has met or exceeded all requirements. CMS said it intends to renew the contract for three more years as long as CMS and LHCR can agree on the terms of the renewal at least 30 days before the next contract is scheduled to begin in late summer. A renewal will mean that LHCR will remain in place as the Medicare quality improvement organization for Louisiana at least through summer 2011.

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This material was prepared by Louisiana Health Care Review, Inc. (LHCR), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Louisiana, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. LA8SoW1ABCD08-O1661