



## Louisiana Health Care Review

The Medicare Quality Improvement Organization  
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### Local Health Care Quality Improvement Effort to Begin Baton Rouge area hospitals come together to address avoidable hospital admissions

#### **For Immediate Release**

December 22, 2008 (Baton Rouge, LA) -- A community-wide movement to improve health care quality by reducing the number of re-hospitalizations of Medicare patients began last week.

#### **Collaborative members include:**

- Baton Rouge General Medical Center
- Lane Regional Medical Center
- Ochsner Medical Center-Baton Rouge
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center
- St. Elizabeth Hospital in Gonzales

#### **Group to reduce avoidable hospital re-admissions**

The effort, the Care Transitions Community Collaborative, is being led by Louisiana Health Care Review and includes five local hospitals and other community partners including home health agencies, who are working together to reduce the number of people who need to be re-admitted to a hospital within 30 days following their discharge.

This effort follows the recent publication of state-by-state health care rankings that places Louisiana last. One critical factor in this low ranking was the rate of preventable hospitalizations per 1,000 Medicare enrollees. The annual study was conducted by United Health Foundation.

The kick-off meeting took place at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation on North Fourth St., and included a discussion of the issue from a local perspective, the specific planned activities and interventions, and ended with a question and answer session.

#### **Project Scope Includes Interventions**

"The project will focus on identifying and implementing a variety of interventions in the participating hospitals and the community that will reduce the rate of re-hospitalizations," said Scott Flowers, the project director for Louisiana Health Care Review.

"The interventions are designed to improve the discharge process in ways that will ensure that patients receive the proper after care and follow-up that ultimately results in fewer unnecessary readmissions."

### **Re-Hospitalizations National Problem**

Reducing the rate of preventable re-hospitalizations is also a subject of national health care quality concern.

- Within 30 days of discharge, 17.6 percent of Medicare beneficiaries nationally are re-hospitalized.
- The Medicare Payment Advisory Committee estimates that up to 76 percent of those readmissions may be preventable, representing a potential savings to Medicare of over \$12 billion in one year.
- With the right incentives in place, the national Medicare program could save more than \$100 billion over the next decade if the 30-day re-hospitalization rate is decreased to the national average.

Flowers said the project will focus on patients who were first admitted to the hospital following a heart attack, who have congestive heart failure or pneumonia.

"We believe this project will help us to quickly identify interventions that work to reduce the rate of re-hospitalizations," Flowers added. "These successful strategies can then be rolled out to other communities. Then, we should begin to see real and substantial improvements in this key measure of health care quality."

The Care Transitions Community Collaborative in Louisiana is a three-year effort to be conducted in partnership with major care providers and stakeholder groups.