



OPINION

Letter: Improving state health-care quality



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What does health-care reform mean to us all? For some, it's a recognition the federal government is trying to ensure that all Americans have access to appropriate health-care services. For others, it's the first step by the government toward implementing a single-payer system.

But, no matter what side of the debate you fall on, we can probably all agree that improving health-care quality should be a goal of any reform effort. Oct. 17-23 is National HealthCare Quality Week, a time in which health-care professionals seek to highlight the quality improvements that are being made. For example, in Louisiana fewer older patients are being readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of discharge. Since the 30-day readmission rate is a national benchmark for quality, this is great news for our state.

In other examples, Louisiana hospitals have improved the care they provide to patients undergoing surgery, and there are fewer patients with pressure ulcers (bed sores) in nursing homes. These improvements are based on national measures and have been recognized by the federal Medicare/Medicaid agency.

The week highlights the influence of health-care quality professionals in helping to achieve results such as these. As our state's quality improvement organization, we recognize the dedication of our state's health care work force in making quality a true measure of health-care reform.

Scott Flowers
Louisiana project director, eQHealth Solutions
Baton Rouge

