



LOUISIANA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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May 27, 2008

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman:

Thank you for your letter of May 6, 2008 and your interest in improving healthcare quality. Like you, the Louisiana Hospital Association (LHA) shares your concern for the health and well-being of our citizens. I am eager to share with you some of the LHA's quality and transparency initiatives. These programs are creating excitement in our state, with the expected result of improving quality, reducing the rate of infection, and ultimately eliminating hospital-acquired infections and other serious adverse events.

First, I would like to address your specific questions asked in your letter. Unfortunately, at this time we do not have specific data on rates of central line-associated bloodstream infections in the intensive care units in hospitals in our state. While there are no specific plans to implement the Michigan Hospital Association program in Louisiana, we have been in recent contact with their organization and have begun to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating all or part of their program. To answer your question relative to addressing healthcare-associated infections in our state, I would like to share with you the following:

Recently, the LHA has partnered with our state Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) in a statewide initiative to educate and provide resources for hospitals to help eliminate hospital-acquired infections (HAIs), including Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). Some of the specific action steps of this initiative include:

- The LHA published a series of articles in our weekly newsletter and our trustee newsletter outlining the problem and offering action steps toward elimination of HAIs. These articles were targeted to member CEOs, hospital board members, and other key leadership.
- The LHA and the QIO are developing an education campaign with written and electronic educational resources for hospital clinicians, administrators, and board members focusing on the four cornerstones of surveillance, risk assessment, hand hygiene and contact precautions.
- The LHA is supporting the QIO as the state node in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) "5 Million Lives Campaign" by aggressively promoting and recruiting hospitals to utilize the IHI's five recommendations to significantly reduce MRSA/HAIs in healthcare settings.

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The LHA recently created the position of Vice President of Quality and Regulatory Activities to help steer statewide efforts to reduce adverse events, HAIs and MRSA. Additionally, an LHA Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Advisory Panel has been formed to provide expertise and guidance to help address this issue, along with other quality and patient safety driven initiatives developed and/or supported by the Association and its member hospitals.

The LHA was a driving force in the development of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, whose mission is *"to lead evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of the people of Louisiana."* The Forum grew out of deliberations of the Louisiana Redesign Collaborative, the committee that examined ways to restructure healthcare in New Orleans and throughout the state following the devastating hurricanes of 2005, and is a private, not-for-profit organization whose volunteer board represents a cross section of public and private insurance purchasers, patient advocates, providers, physicians and insurers in the state. Dozens of other stakeholders volunteer their time in committees that focus on health information technology, quality measurement, medical homes, and outreach and education.

The LHA was also the first organization in the state to embrace healthcare transparency by developing an easy to navigate public website, LaHospitalInform.org, providing:

- Pricing data on the 100 most common inpatient and outpatient services
- Quality data on surgical infections, 30-day mortality and the most common causes of hospitalization: heart attack, congestive heart failure and pneumonia
- Patient satisfaction survey information from Hospital CAHPS®
- Demographic information, services offered and contact numbers for hospitals

Currently, the LHA is actively working with the Governor of Louisiana and Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals in support of state legislation to develop a state-sponsored transparency and reporting portal for all healthcare providers, not just hospitals. This information will be available to the public on a website dedicated to transparency to help consumers make informed choices before they spend their healthcare dollars.

In closing, I would like to thank you again for your interest in the state of healthcare in Louisiana and nationwide. Successfully tackling and winning the battle against MRSA, HAIs, and other adverse events in our hospitals will indeed require the vision, support and direction of individuals like yourself. Focusing our attention on those things that truly impact our nation's health and well-being and dedicating the necessary resources, both financial and intellectual, will result in a healthier patient, healthcare delivery system and nation. Please feel free to contact me if I can assist in any way.

Sincerely,



John A. Matessino
President & CEO