

[Serious Thinking About Standards](#)

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The Tulane School of Medicine and Tulane Medical Center have begun a new initiative to improve patient safety and prevent medical errors by bolstering quality standards. The hospital and school have set up two task forces to begin working on recommendations and an implementation plan this year.



Tulane Medical Center, shown above, and the Tulane School of Medicine are teaming up on a new initiative to prevent medical errors. (Photo by Sally Asher)

“The initiative's goal is to improve the infrastructure necessary to improve quality and patient safety institution-wide, meaning across both the hospital and School of Medicine facilities,” says Dr. Frank Rosinia, chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, who is leading the effort.

Ever since the national Institute of Medicine released its landmark report “To Err Is Human” in 1999, the healthcare industry has been increasingly focused on improving quality standards. The report found that as many as 98,000 patients die annually from preventable medical errors.

Tulane's effort will establish a baseline for quality in certain areas, such as infection rates for certain procedures. An example would be data showing the number of catheter-related blood stream infections and a plan to reduce them to zero.

“Patient safety means that when patients come here they know that they will be cared for,” Rosinia says. “We are all vulnerable when we come into a hospital for care. Patients need to know that we are serious about our quality standards.”

The quality improvement subcommittee, which is made up of senior university and [hospital](#) leadership along with members of the hospital's board of directors, will set institution-wide quality goals that initially focus on patient-centered care, patient safety and efficiency.

The quality directors committee is an interdepartmental group made up of [medical school](#) faculty, [School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#) faculty and hospital clinical quality liaisons.