

Electronic Health Record Adoption



Early efforts to measure electronic health record (EHR) adoption and use among clinicians have been hampered by problems with inconsistent definitions, terminologies, and target populations, as well as poor quality measurements. RTI International researchers have recently conducted two projects to learn more about how best to measure the rate of adoption of EHRs by U.S. medical group office practices and hospitals and the factors that influence the rate of adoption.

Electronic Health Record Adoption Focus Groups: Hospital Administrators and Physician Practices

Under contract with Partners Healthcare at Massachusetts General Hospital, RTI conducted focus groups with primary care physicians and hospital chief information officers to learn more about the factors that affect the adoption and use of EHRs. Information was collected from primary care physician practice leaders and hospital executives and administrators who participated in one of five focus groups conducted in three cities: Denver, Colorado (two groups), Chicago, Illinois (two groups), and Framingham, Massachusetts (one group). These focus groups helped to lay the foundation for the National Survey to Measure the Adoption of Electronic Health Records Among Physician and Group Practices.

National Survey to Measure the Adoption of Electronic Health Records Among Physician and Group Practices

With funding from George Washington University and Massachusetts General Hospital through a contract from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) within the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), RTI conducted a survey to measure the extent to which EHRs are in use in outpatient medical practices in the United States. Preliminary results were presented to the secretary of DHHS and the president of the United States in November 2007.

For this study, RTI developed multi-modal data collection procedures and implemented a survey of 5,000 physicians and their practices across the United States to measure the adoption and use of EHRs. Using web, mail, and phone interviewing techniques, RTI received responses from more than 60% of the 5,000 physicians sampled. Among other things, the data indicate that physicians who use EHRs say these systems improve the quality of health care and that they are satisfied with their EHR systems. The survey data also exposed important variations in adoption, by the physicians' practice setting, geographic location, and personal characteristics.



Electronic Health Record Adoption *(continued)*

RTI's study design included scientific probability sampling and cognitive and field testing. This study established a baseline measurement and evaluated the question wording for possible inclusion in the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS) so that DHHS could begin to collect reliable longitudinal measures of EHR adoption and implementation. Results of this research were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (C. M. DesRoches et al., NEJM, 359, 50–60, 2008).

More Information

Linda Dimitropoulos, PhD
Sr. Director, Health Services Research Program
Phone: +1.312.456.5246
E-mail: lld@rti.org
RTI International
3040 Cornwallis Road, PO Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 USA

RTI 6902 R1 0210



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