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NEWS RELEASE

A Progress Report On Electronic Health Records In U.S. Hospitals

CHICAGO – August 26, 2010 – A new study released today by *Health Affairs* finds that while the share of U.S. hospitals that had adopted either basic or comprehensive electronic health records rose modestly between 2008 and 2009, from 8.7 percent to 11.9 percent, only 2 percent of this country’s hospitals reported having records that would meet the federal government’s “meaningful use” criteria. Maulik Joshi, President of the Health Research and Educational Trust (HRET) and Senior Vice President of Research for the American Hospital Association (AHA), was one of the authors of the study.

“Hospitals are eager to embrace health IT and understand the vital role it will play in coming years, but the implementation journey will need to be closely followed,” said Dr. Joshi.

The authors of the study go on to note that, “Policy makers need to consider ways to make it easier for hospitals to adopt electronic health records and meet the criteria for their meaningful use—especially in the case of smaller, rural, and public hospitals . . . to ensure that all Americans, regardless of where they receive care, derive the benefits that health IT has to offer.”

To compile their data, the authors used responses to a 2009 survey by the American Hospital Association of all acute care, nonfederal hospitals about their health information technology (IT) activities as of March 1, 2009. Of the 4,493 hospitals surveyed, 3,101 provided information. The authors found that there was wide variation in the rate of adoption of individual health IT functions. For example, 85 percent of the responding hospitals had fully implemented electronic radiology reports in at least one hospital unit, compared to 66 percent of respondents that had fully implemented medication lists, and 33 percent that had fully implemented physician notes. Public and rural hospitals had 40 percent lower odds of having adopted basic electronic records in the year before the survey, compared to private nonprofit and urban hospitals.

Support for the study was provided by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition to Dr. Joshi, it was authored by Peter Kralovec, senior director of the Health Forum, in Chicago; Ashish K Jha, who is serving as a senior adviser to the under secretary for health of the Veterans Health Administration, is affiliated with the Harvard School of Public Health, Harvard Medical School, Veterans Affairs Boston Healthcare System, and Brigham and Women’s Hospital, all in Boston; and Catherine M DesRoches who is a survey scientist and an assistant professor of medicine with Partners Healthcare in Boston.

For more information please visit www.hret.org. The Health Affairs [article](http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/abstract/hlthaff.2010.0502) can be found at <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/abstract/hlthaff.2010.0502>

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About the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET)

Founded in 1944, the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET) is a private, not-for-profit organization involved in research, education, and demonstration programs addressing health management and policy issues. An affiliate of the American Hospital Association (AHA), HRET collaborates with health care, government, academic, business, and community organizations across the United States to conduct research and disseminate findings that shape the future of health care. For more information about HRET, visit www.hret.org.