Many Still Fearful Of Electronic Records Systems

Although physicians support the use of electronic health records, concerns about potential privacy breaches remain an issue, according to two research articles published in the January 2010 issue of the *Journal of the American Informatics Association* (JAMIA).

One published study is based on views of more than 1,000 family practice and specialist physicians in Massachusetts who were asked whether they thought electronic health information exchange (HIE) would drive down costs, improve patient care, free up their time and preserve patient confidentiality. They were also asked whether they would be willing to pay a monthly fee to use the system.

The HIE among different long-distance providers has become the focus of intense national interest following recent legislation and moves to offer cash incentives for those who switch to the system. The responses showed widespread support for the use of HIE, even though just over half were actually using electronic health records. Responses exemplify the mixed feelings of the medical profession.

- 86 percent said that HIE would improve the quality of care.
- Seven out of 10 thought it would cut costs.
- 76 percent felt it would save time.
- 16 percent said they were very concerned about potential breaches of privacy, while another 55 percent were “somewhat concerned”.

Despite their overall enthusiasm, physicians were not willing to support the suggested $150 monthly fee, and nearly half were unwilling to pay anything at all.