

Report highlights progress, challenges in health IT

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(HealthDay)—Progress has been made toward widespread adoption of electronic health records (EHRs), although there are still barriers to adoption of advanced use of EHRs, according to a report published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Researchers from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation used nationally representative survey data to evaluate progress in [health information technology](#) in the United States and to identify the challenges that lie ahead.

According to the report, nearly two-thirds of eligible hospitals received an EHR incentive payment in December 2013, but few hospitals were able to meet Stage 2 criteria (5.8 percent in 2013). Nearly half of physicians had adopted at least a basic EHR in 2013. Critical-access and small rural hospitals are over-represented among the proportion of

hospitals that have not adopted a basic EHR. Electronic [health information exchange](#) is not yet widespread, with barriers including privacy and security, competition concerns, and lack of physician demand. Clinical decision support functionalities have been widely adopted in relation to medication safety, but there is an opportunity for broad use of functionalities. Barriers to implementation include lack of flexibility to customize care. EHRs can also be used to identify gaps in care, but few EHRs offer these functions automatically.

"Coupled with the steadily rising adoption figures is, however, a growing sense that our collective investment in EHRs may not pay off," the authors write.

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