HITECH Act did not speed up electronic health record adoption as hoped, study shows

August 20 2015, by Nicole Wyatt

The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act was signed into law Feb. 17, 2009, to promote the adoption and meaningful use of health information technology, improve the quality of health care, prevent medical errors, reduce health care costs, increase administrative efficiencies, decrease paperwork, and

expand access to affordable health care.

A new study led by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, "Impact of the HITECH Act on Physicians' Adoption of Electronic Health Records," published online in July 2015 in the *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, finds that the financial incentives offered to physicians through meaningful use programs actually had a weak impact on the uptake of EHRs.

"The models suggest that adoption was driven largely by 'imitation' effects as physicians mimic their peers' technology use or respond to mandates," said lead study author Stephen T. Mennemeyer, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Health Care Organization and Policy. "Small and often insignificant 'innovation' effects were found, suggesting little enthusiasm by physicians who are leaders in technology adoption."

Mennemeyer and co-authors suggest further research be completed to better understand the dynamics of physician adoption patterns.

More information: "Impact of the HITECH act on physicians' adoption of electronic health records." DOI: dx.doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocv103

Provided by University of Alabama at Birmingham

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