

U.S. primary care doctors face challenges in coordinating care

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Physicians from the United States and other high-income countries

report difficulties with care coordination, with a substantial proportion of U.S. physicians not receiving timely notification or the information needed from specialists or other sites of care, according to a study published online Dec. 10 in *Health Affairs*.

Michelle M. Doty, M.P.H., Ph.D., from the Commonwealth Fund in New York City, and colleagues queried [primary care physicians](#) in 11 high-income countries about their ability to coordinate patients' medical care with specialists, across settings of care, and with social service providers to inform efforts to improve care coordination.

The researchers found that a substantial proportion of U.S. physicians did not routinely receive timely notification or the information needed for managing ongoing care from specialists, after-hours care centers, emergency departments, or hospitals compared with physicians in other countries. In a handful of countries, including the United States, primary care practices were not routinely exchanging information electronically outside the practice. The feasibility of improving two-way communication between primary care and other sites of care was demonstrated by top-performing countries.

"Developments in computing and [communication technologies](#) are opening new avenues for efficient and effective communication and data sharing between health care organizations and social service providers," the authors write. "Improved technology alone will not suffice."

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