

# Hospitals and EHRs: the good news and bad news

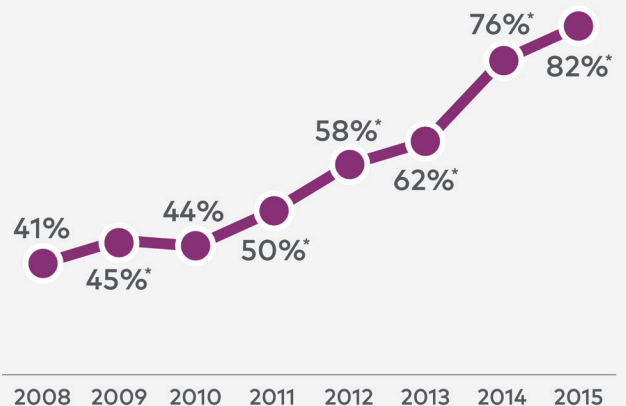
By David Levine | June 23, 2016

Two recent data briefs from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology tell a good news/bad news story about electronic health records. The good news, the ONC reports, is that nearly every hospital has an electronic health record system. The bad news? Hospitals still struggle with exchanging patient medical records with other healthcare providers.

The data, from a survey conducted by the American Hospital Association, describe trends in adoption of EHR technology among non-federal acute care hospitals between 2008 and 2015. The survey tracked the adoption of basic EHR systems and the possession of certified EHR technology – and shows that 96 percent of hospitals have an EHR that has been federally tested and certified for a government incentive program, created by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of 2009.

That figure represents a substantial improvement from 2011, the first year of incentives, when 71.9 percent of hospitals had EHRs. And it's a huge jump from 2008, when only 9 percent of hospitals were using electronic record systems.

Percentage of hospitals that exchanged information with outside providers, 2008-2015

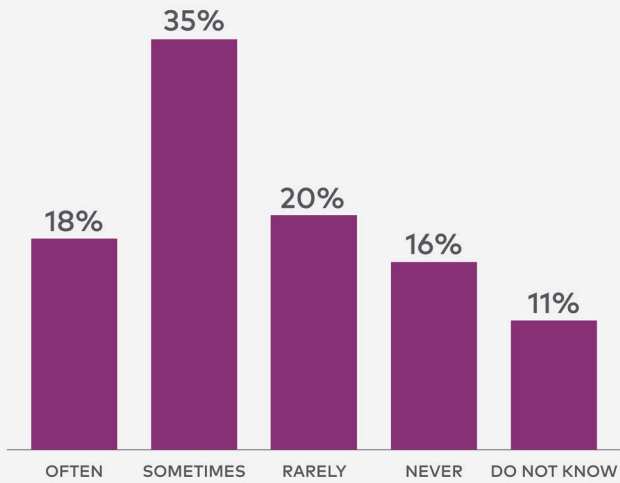


Includes lab results, radiological reports, clinical care summaries, and medication lists.

NOTES: \*Significantly different from previous year ( $p < 0.05$ ). Exchange was assessed using survey questions asking respondents whether their hospital electronically exchanged or shared the following four types of clinical information: radiology reports, laboratory results, clinical care summaries, and medication lists.  
SOURCE: ONC/American Hospital Association (AHA), AHA Annual Survey Information Technology Supplement

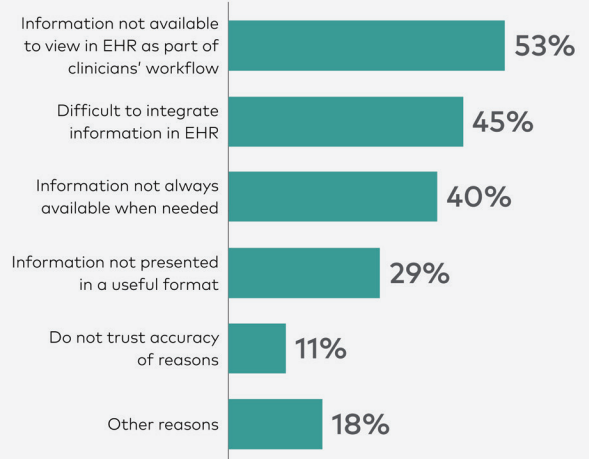
But only 18 percent of hospitals surveyed responded that their clinicians “often” use patient information received electronically from outside providers or other sources. About a third of respondents use such information “sometimes,” and more than a third say they use it “rarely” or “never.”

### How frequently hospitals use electronic patient information from outside their system, 2015



SOURCE: ONC/American Hospital Association (AHA), AHA Annual Survey Information Technology Supplement

### Why hospitals don't use patient information from outside their systems



SOURCE: ONC/American Hospital Association (AHA), AHA Annual Survey Information Technology Supplement

Why don't more hospital clinicians use outside electronic information? The most common reasons given: The information is not available to view within the hospital's own EHR, and it's hard to integrate the exchanged information with the hospital EHR.



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