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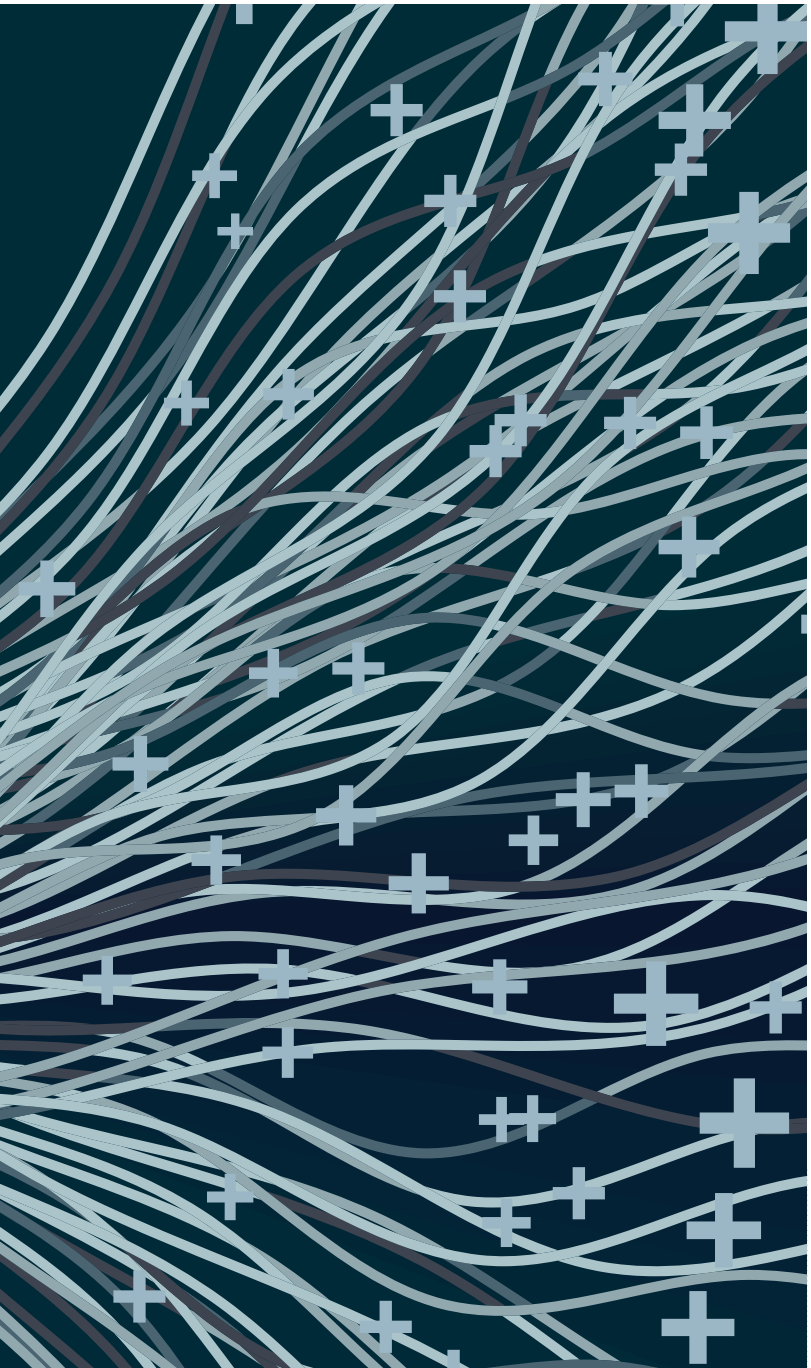

E-Guide

LABS, E-PRESCRIBING SYSTEMS DRIVE HEALTH IT INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

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Labs, e-prescribing systems drive health IT infrastructure expansion

A **SURVEY SHOWED U.S. HEALTH** IT infrastructure is growing, driven by e-prescribing systems, computerized physician order entry and lab data exchange along with an increase in EHR systems used among physician's practices. Read this expert E-Guide to discover why the dramatic expansion and how to handle it.

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Reda Chouffani

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Between the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs and the pay-for-performance programs for healthcare providers, there has been a very clear increase in EHR systems used among physician's practices. U.S. health IT infrastructure is also growing, driven by e-prescribing systems, computerized physician order entry and lab data exchange.

This increase has created demand for technology infrastructure and services, but also has enabled many physicians to leverage computerized physician order entry (CPOE), e-prescribing, and sharing lab test data features in these systems -- workflows previously marooned in paper files.

According to a 2011 study conducted by the American Journal of Managed Care (AJMC), 57% of office-based physicians use EHR systems, a 12% increase from the previous year. The study gauged the level of clinical information exchange.

AJMC researchers focused on how clinicians exchange pharmacy data and

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lab and patient clinical summaries. They concluded that, despite meaningful use certification requirements, not all EHR systems have all the appropriate capabilities to efficiently exchange health information.

Electronic prescribing and lab results were available in many systems prior to the requirements of a certified EHR package. However, a number of physicians are beginning to exchange clinical summaries as well as use CPOE: According to the study, one-third of physicians currently have that ability. I believe the results from surveys such as these will continue to show an increase in that EHR functionality, especially considering some of the additional exchange requirements that will become effective with the introduction of meaningful use stage 2.

But as they increase in quantity, EHRs and applications such as e-prescribing systems will need to keep pace with features that clinicians demand, and will have to offer moreinteroperability.

REDA CHOUFFANI is vice president of development with Biz Technology Solutions Inc., which provides software design, development and deployment services for the healthcare industry. Let us know what you think about the story; emaileditor@searchhealthit.comor contact@SearchHealthITon Twitter.

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