Florida doctors seeing Medicaid patients show broad interest in federal incentives for adopting electronic health records.

The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act of 2009 aims to expand the use of electronic health records by offering financial incentives to physicians to fully adopt and implement them. We surveyed Florida physicians who deliver care to Medicaid participants to identify their interest in participating in the incentive program. More than 60 percent of all respondents expressed interest in applying for the incentives; of those already using electronic health record systems, 86 percent intend to apply for funding. This relatively high proportion of physicians creates the potential to reach the overall policy goals of the law. Among those not planning to seek incentives, common barriers--especially among nonusers of electronic health records--were "costs involved" (69 percent), "need more information about incentive program" (42 percent), and uncertainty about what system to purchase (42 percent). We suggest that these findings hold implications for the Regional Extension Centers working to help physicians achieve the federal meaningful-use criteria that are a condition of receiving the incentives. In particular, the centers should focus on providing physicians with information about costs of electronic health record systems.
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