

## **International Survey: U.S. Physicians Slow to Adopt Health IT**

A new analysis of health information technology (IT) deployment in seven industrialized countries finds that physicians' adoption of health IT is highly variable, with the United States lagging well behind the other countries. The study, conducted by Karen Davis and Commonwealth Fund researchers and published in the journal *Health Policy*, also found that physicians with greater IT capacity were more likely to report feeling well prepared to manage patients with chronic illnesses. Use of electronic medical records ranges from nearly all physicians in the Netherlands to only 23 percent in Canada and 28 percent in the U.S., according to the survey findings. Read the full report at [http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=803553](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=803553)

Data for the analysis was obtained from the 2006 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Primary Care Physicians, which involved 6,536 physicians in seven countries: Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S.

According to health IT policy expert David Blumenthal, M.D., the federal government can help providers overcome the financial, technical, and logistical obstacles to IT adoption. In a recent piece written for The Commonwealth Fund, Blumenthal, the director of the Institute for Health Policy at Massachusetts General Hospital/Partners HealthCare System and a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, discusses a range of policy options--from assisting financially strapped providers with IT acquisition, to reforming the provider payment system, to creating national regulations and standards for data security and patient privacy. See the report on The Federal Role in Promoting Health Information Technology at [http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=792771](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=792771)