

## New study of Hudson Valley primary care practices among first to connect use of electronic health records to better quality care

*Doctors who used EHRs scored better on preventive care measures*

Fishkill, NY Oct. 8, 2012-- A new study links quality of care in physician office practices to the use of electronic health records (EHRs); it is among the first to make the important connection. The findings confirm that the significant investment in EHRs by both the federal government and the physicians who use them will result in better care.

"Electronic Health Records and Ambulatory Quality of Care," published in the current issue of the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, found that physicians using EHRs scored significantly higher on quality of care for four screening measures for diabetes, breast cancer, chlamydia and colorectal cancer. A composite score of all measures used in the study showed EHR use was associated with overall higher quality of care. The study, conducted by researchers associated with Weill Cornell Medical College and New York-Presbyterian Hospital, examined data from 466 physicians in the community setting. The study used baseline year data that was assembled for the Hudson Valley Medical Home Project, a [Hudson Valley Initiative](#) project.

"Use of an EHR is a critical component of advanced primary care," said A. John Blair III, MD, president of Taconic IPA and CEO of MedAllies, the Hudson Valley's health information services provider. "As with any health IT tool, an EHR is only part of the solution and must be integrated into the practice workflow and used by the care team to advance high quality, patient-centered care." All the physicians in the Weill-Cornell study were members of Taconic IPA, which now boasts an 80 percent EHR adoption rate.

The Hudson Valley has been a leader in adoption of EHRs and transformation of primary care to enhance patient care, improve population health and lower overall costs. It is one of seven regions recently selected for the Comprehensive Primary Care (CPC) initiative, a four-year, multi-payer initiative led by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation. The initiative will test a service delivery model of comprehensive and accountable primary care; among its emphases is meaningful use of health information technology to improve patient care. Physician practices and hospitals that meet specific federal standards for meaningful use of health information technology are eligible to receive incentive payments from CMS. In addition, the federal government has established financial "Meaningful Use" incentives, totaling \$29 billion, to encourage EHR adoption by physician practices.

Until recently, few studies could validate the clinical value of EHRs.

"The previous studies on the effects of electronic health records in the outpatient setting have been mixed," said the study's lead investigator, Dr. Lisa M. Kern, associate professor of public health and medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College. "This is one of the first studies to find a positive association between the use of EHRs and quality of care in a typical community-based setting, using an off-the-shelf electronic health record that has not been extensively tailored and refined. This increases the generalizability of these findings."

The study abstract may be viewed [here](#).

Taconic Health Information Network and Community, Taconic IPA and MedAllies are part of the Hudson Valley Initiative, an effort to transform the health care system, first in New York and eventually nationwide.

### About the Hudson Valley Initiative

The Hudson Valley Initiative is an effort among three organizations-Taconic IPA, Taconic Health Information

Network and Community and MedAllies-to revolutionize health care delivery through a shared vision to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of health care in the community. These three organizations leverage health information technology, physician practice transformation and value-based purchasing in pursuit of care delivery that is patient-centered, coordinated, accessible, high quality and efficiently delivered through sustainable financial models. To learn more, go to [www.hudsonvalleyinitiative.com](http://www.hudsonvalleyinitiative.com).

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