

Population Health NEWS

Industry News



Efforts to Improve Population Health Hampered by Lack of Communication

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Hospitals and health systems face a range of complex challenges as they take on new levels of risk and innovate around different models of care. But a new survey identifies a much more fundamental problem to improving population health—doctors and nurses struggling to get in touch with each other to coordinate care among themselves and with their patients.

The survey of 955 healthcare professionals, conducted online by Harris Poll and commissioned by PerfectServe, represents a broad cross-section of the healthcare provider ecosystem: physicians (hospitalists, primary care physicians in large offices, specialists in both hospital and office settings); nurses in hospitals; case managers; hospital administrators; and office managers.

While 98% of respondents (both clinical and administrative) feel improved communication with patients is required for effective population health management, and 95% believe that successful care collaboration leads to reduced readmissions, clinicians feel hindered by a patchwork of antiquated or underutilized communication technologies, wasted exchanges and concerns about privacy and security.

Key survey findings include:

- Sixty-nine percent of clinicians feel patient care is often delayed while waiting for important information about the patient.
- More than half of clinicians (52%) admit they don't always know the correct care team member to contact in a given situation.
- Seventy-one percent of responding physicians indicate they have wasted time trying to communicate with a broader care team.
- Only 25% of physicians strongly agree with the assertion that they can usually contact colleagues for collaboration or consults effectively.
- Nearly half of physicians (48%) report being frequently contacted erroneously when they're not caring for the patient in question.
- Clinicians use an electronic health record only 12% of the time to communicate with each other about complex information.
- Nearly three in 10 medical professionals (29%) are not satisfied with the technology their organization uses for secure communications.
- About three in five respondents (61%) believe that HIPAA regulations pose an obstacle to communication and collaboration within the care team.