

## Push for EHR Standardisation



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According to experts, having standards for the exchange of information between electronic health records or for the exchange of actual information is critical to increasing personal satisfaction with EHRs.

At the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing, Boyd Vindell Washington, MD, chief medical information officer at the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, in Baton Rouge, La. said that there should be an agency or group that should establish these standards.

Sen. Bill Cassidy, MD, (R-La.) also said that there are specific areas where EHR implementation is falling short, one of which is the overly burdensome Meaningful Use program developed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that financially rewards doctors and hospitals who make meaningful use of EHRs.

Cassidy noted that "Only 11% of eligible physicians have successfully attested to Stage 2 [of the] Meaningful Use requirements, even though financial penalties for noncompliance began this year. This suggests that the Meaningful Use requirements are so burdensome that many doctors will take a financial penalty because they are unable or unwilling to comply with burdensome government standards."

Meryl Moss, chief operating officer at Coastal Medical, a large primary care physician group in Providence, R.I. also believes that standards would help when selecting an EHR vendor. Comparing one vendor to another can be difficult but if standards were there, the process could become easier and efficient. She suggested that quality measures should be harmonised.

Sen. Whitehouse points out that Meaningful Use program takes too much time and this time was better spent on networking which is the area requiring more attention. He added. "If we empower the local health information exchange, they can be a forum for sorting through a lot of those issues without having the federal government be engaged in doing a lot of those things. I'd rather see [it done] state by state and network by network."

Source: Medpage Today

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