# Health information technology may cut demand for physicians

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(HealthDay)—Health information technology (IT) may cut demand for physicians in the future, according to a review published in the November issue of *Health Affairs*.

Jonathan P. Weiner, Dr.P.H., from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues performed a comprehensive literature review of previously published systematic reviews and relevant individual studies to estimate the effect if health IT were fully implemented in 30 percent of community-based physician

offices.

The researchers found that, if health IT were fully implemented in 30 percent of community-based physician offices, the demand for physicians would be reduced by 4 to 9 percent. Health-IT-supported delegation of care to nurse practitioners and physician assistants could reduce the future demand for physicians by 4 to 7 percent. Additionally, delegation from specialist physicians to generalists with IT support could reduce the demand for specialists by 2 to 5 percent. Using health IT, about 12 percent of care could be delivered remotely or asynchronously, thus addressing regional shortages of physicians. If comprehensive health IT systems were adopted by 70 percent of U.S. ambulatory care delivery settings, the estimated impacts could more than double.

"Future predictions of physician supply adequacy should take these likely changes into account," the authors write.

**More information:** Abstract
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