

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**  
**SURVEY OF PHYSICIANS REGARDING E-PRESCRIBING**  
**JUNE 7 – JULY 6, 2007**

This national survey of 407 physicians shows that, while they think e-prescribing\* is a good idea, very few use it. Highlights of the survey include:

**1. While physicians overwhelmingly believe that e-prescribing would reduce medication errors, save time, and be good for medicine, only about one in ten actually use e-prescribing on a regular basis.** Eighty-one percent of physicians say e-prescribing's widespread use would reduce medication errors, while 13 percent say it would not. Sixty-five percent say it would save time, while 26 percent say it would not. And 85 percent of physicians think e-prescribing is a good idea, while only 9 percent think it is a bad idea. But only 7 percent transmit prescriptions electronically.

**2. Almost two out of three physicians say implementing an e-prescribing system is not a priority in their offices.** Thirty-five percent say implementing e-prescribing is a priority, while 63 percent say it is not.

**3. The reasons physicians give for not making e-prescribing a priority are typically financial or administrative rather than clinical.** The most common reason offered why e-prescribing is not a priority is the expense and lack of reimbursement for adopting a new system. Other reasons physicians cite are the benefits not being worth the cost, not enough time to learn a complex new system, their staff is not trained, the paper system they use now is working well, they do not write enough prescriptions to justify it, they do not have the appropriate equipment at their office, e-prescribing lacks a single, unified database, and e-prescribing is not compatible with their current computer system. *Only 5 percent of those for whom e-prescribing is not a priority say concerns about security and patient privacy are the reason.*

**4. Eighty-three percent of physicians say they could productively use more information on their patients' medication history and potential drug interactions at least some of the time.** Thirty-six percent say they could productively use more information most of the time, and 47 percent say some of the time. Before writing a prescription, physicians do not typically use e-prescribing to learn their patients' medication history. The most common way physicians learn of their patients' prescription history is by asking the patients themselves—57 percent. Twenty-three percent pull the patient's chart, and 6 percent use an electronic system.

**5. While most physicians are unaware of the prescription drugs that are covered by their patients' health insurance plans, more than eight out of ten would be willing to switch from a non-covered to a covered drug if they were aware of the alternatives.** Seventy percent of physicians say they do not usually know which drugs are covered by their patients' health insurance plans. But 83 percent of physicians say they would switch from a non-covered to a comparable covered drug, 6 percent say they would not switch, and 10 percent say it depends on the drug.

\*The survey defined e-prescribing as "having on-line access to a continually-updated database with a patient's prescription history and formulary information, and transmitting the prescription electronically to a pharmacy."

## ***Methodology***

The survey of 407 physicians was conducted June 7 through July 6, 2007. Respondents were selected randomly from a list of physicians throughout the country in fields that typically write prescriptions. The sample was purchased from American Medical Information, and all respondents confirmed that they regularly write prescriptions for their patients. The margin of error for responses with an even split – 50 percent for one response and 50 percent for another response – is plus or minus 4.86 percent. The margin of error is smaller when one response receives a higher level of support. For example, the margin of error is plus or minus 4.21 percent when 75 percent of respondents choose one response and 25 percent choose another response.