

## HIN Newsletter Draft/News Release

### **Worried About Medical Errors, Mainers Say They Want To See Greater Information-Sharing Among Their Caregivers**

Concerned about medical errors and what they believe is poor coordination among their caregivers, Maine people say they will support efforts to improve care through wider adoption of electronic medical records and information-sharing.

Recent statewide polling found that 9 out of 10 Maine citizens think it is very important that their doctors have access to all of their medical records, including primary care and specialist reports, test results and medications. They agree that more information sharing will lead to fewer medical errors and better care coordination—but they want to be assured that rigorous privacy and security protections are in place and the system is overseen by a trusted entity.

This new public opinion research comes at a time when doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers across Maine are moving rapidly to replace traditional paper-based medical records with electronic technology. New systems are expected to give doctors the information they need—when it is needed most—to make better and more informed patient care decisions. Doctors and others believe this will lead to fewer medical errors, an overall improvement in quality and a reduction in costly and sometimes unnecessary and duplicative tests, procedures and hospitalizations.

**HealthInfoNet** ([www.hinfonet.org](http://www.hinfonet.org)), a Maine-based independent, nonprofit organization currently is building a statewide electronic health information exchange system. The system is designed to improve the quality of care, reduce medical errors, reduce duplication of services, connect Maine to the nation's emerging information technology system, and provide consumers with access to their personal healthcare information.

Through its participation in a federal-government-funded study of medical privacy, HealthInfoNet retained a Maine-based independent research firm late last year to conduct an extensive public opinion study concerning medical privacy and the trend toward increased use of electronic health information-sharing systems.

600 Mainers randomly selected from across the state were interviewed by telephone. Seventy-five individuals took part in eight focus groups in Presque Isle, Bangor, Lewiston and Portland.\*

#### **Researchers found that Maine people are:**

- Worried that they--or their family members--will fall victim to a medical error
- Convinced that medical errors and poor quality healthcare can result from poor coordination and communication among their caregivers--a problem they believe is far too common
- Adamant that they do not want their personal medical information to be shared with their employer, their insurer or the government
- Interested in having convenient access to their own medical information to become more knowledgeable and more effective advocates for their care. (Example: They would be able to correct wrong, outdated or incomplete information in their records.)

**To learn more about this research, please visit [www.hinfonet.org](http://www.hinfonet.org) or contact Devore Culver, Executive Director, HealthInfoNet, at [dculver@hinfonet.org](mailto:dculver@hinfonet.org) or 207-430-0676.**

\* Source: Critical Insights, 120 Exchange Street, Portland Maine- November 2006 telephone survey with random sample of 600 Maine residents