

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Legal Fears Keep Doctors From E-mailing Patients

Fewer than 4 percent of physicians communicate via e-mail with their patients, according to a study that eWeek says will be published in the Journal of Internal Medicine's November issue. Approximately 30 percent of doctors e-mail with other clinicians, and 40 percent use online -use real-time computerized decision support, including government and professional society Web sites and searchable databases,- eWeek reports.

Physicians say that they generally don't receive payment for e-mail communications with patients because the communication is outside the patient visit, eWeek says. -Doctors worry that the contents of their e-mails, whether to patients or fellow clinicians, could be used against them in legal cases.-