

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Primary-Care Docs Fall Behind in Electronic Records

Only 28 percent of primary care physicians (PCPs) in the United States (and 23 percent in Canada) use electronic medical records, compared to 98 percent in the Netherlands, 92 percent in New Zealand, 89 percent in the United Kingdom and 79 percent in Australia, according to the **Commonwealth Fund** 2006 International Health Policy Survey.

Fewer than 23 percent of U.S. primary care doctors receive computerized alerts for potentially harmful drug interactions or doses, but 93 percent of PCPs in the Netherlands receive such alerts. Only Canada ranked lower than the United States, with just 10 percent of its PCPs reporting that they use computerized alerts.

Around 40 percent or more of Canadian and U.S. PCPs say that -it is difficult or impossible for them to identify patients who are overdue for a test or preventive care,- compared with 19 percent or less in the other surveyed countries, the survey says.