

Verbatim

"We're trying to put the patients back at the centre of the system. The difficulty is that medicare has never evolved. It's a publicly funded system, but it's stuck back in the '60s and '70s in a model of acute illness. Eighty per cent of Canada's disease burden now is chronic care. This care needs to be administered at home, rather than in expensive institutions. The system has never changed to reflect that."

— **CMA President John Haggie**, *Vancouver Sun*, Jan. 17, 2012, after the premiers met in Victoria to discuss health care issues

Bytes in, paper out in MD offices: survey

The popularity of paper records in doctors' offices appears to be declining rapidly, recently analyzed results from the National Physician Survey (NPS) indicate.

The 2010 survey found that only 38% of respondents now rely solely on paper records, a steep decline from the 58% reported in the NPS just 3 years earlier.

The survey found that 16% of respondents now use nothing but electronic records, up from 10% in 2007, while 34% of respondents use a combination of paper and electronic charts. "Alberta was ahead of all other provinces, with two-thirds of physicians using only electronic records or a combination of paper and electronic," the CMA's Collaborative Centre for Physician Resources (C3PR) stated in its analysis. Quebec had the smallest proportion of physicians using electronic medical records (EMRs), with more than half of respondents (56%) relying solely on paper records.

President John Haggie says the CMA strongly supports the switch to EMRs. "There are so many reasons to do it, everything from increased efficiency to improved accuracy to better patient care," he said. "These latest numbers appear to indicate that we are nearing critical mass in switching to EMRs, so it will be interesting to see what the next NPS results show in two years."

The NPS is co-sponsored by the CMA, College of Family Physicians of Canada and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, with additional funding from the Canadian Institute for Health Information. It is conducted every 3 years.

Further analysis is available at www.cma.ca/c3pr.

Six MDs seek CMA presidency

Six physicians are in the running as members of the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) prepare to choose the next nominee for president-elect of the CMA. The candidates are:

- Dr. Steven Chambers of Edmonton, who served as AMA president in 2002-03 and sat on the CMA Board from 2003-06;
- Dr. Louis Francescutti of Edmonton, current president of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada;
- Dr. Robert Hollinshead of Calgary, AMA president in 2001-02 and member of the CMA Board from 2002-05;
- Dr. Kabirudeen Jivraj of Calgary, the AMA president in 1996-97 and CMA treasurer from 1999 to 2001;
- Dr. Tzu-Kuang (T.K.) Lee of Edmonton, AMA president in 2005-06 and CMA Board member from 2006-09;
- Dr. Clayne Steed of Raymond, Alta., who served as AMA president in 2000-01 and sat on the CMA Board from 2001-04.

AMA members have until Feb. 27, 2012, at 4:30 p.m. to vote electronically or by mail. The CMA presidency rotates among the 12 provincial and territorial medical associations according to membership strength. The AMA last selected the nominee in 2004.

Ottawa has key role in health care: poll

The "vast majority" of respondents to a new CMA opinion poll — 92% — think Canada needs national standards for health care. As well, 81% of respondents are worried that without such standards the quality of care Canadians receive will vary according to where they live. Results were released Jan. 16 as premiers met in Victoria to discuss health care.

The Ipsos Reid poll of 1000 Canadians found that 97% of respondents think federal responsibility for the Canada Health Act, which ensures equal access to care and portability of coverage across the country, is "very" or "somewhat" important. As well, 74% said federal and provincial governments share responsibility for health care.

The CMA and Canadian Nurses Association, which are allies in the drive to transform health care, were represented in Victoria by their presidents, Dr. John Haggie and Dr. Judith Shamian. They were buoyed by support from 14 patient advocacy groups that support principles for transforming health care that were developed by the 2 organizations.

"We support the principles of accountability and national standards of care for all, regardless of their province or postal code," said Deb Maskens, chair of Kidney Cancer Canada.