



## **Challenges Ahead for Advancing Health IT outside Hospital Environment**

*New HIMSS Leadership and Workforce Survey notes*

*health IT continues as "bright spot" in the economy even as EHR adoption matures*

**ORLANDO, Fla.** (February 20, 2017) – A new study from [HIMSS](#), unveiled today at the 2017 HIMSS Conference & Exhibition, reinforces the positive impact health IT has on the U.S. economy while signaling challenges ahead for the expansion of health IT's footprint.

Weaving together two historically seminal HIMSS research efforts (the annual HIMSS Leadership Survey and the biennial HIMSS Workforce Study), the new HIMSS Leadership and Workforce Survey report details the health IT priorities of key stakeholder groups and their linkages to various strategic initiatives (e.g. employment of select IT leaders) and economic measures (e.g. workforce projections). In an era of maturing EHR adoption, the study finds health IT leaders continue to report positive market growth metrics. Yet, health IT staffing structures and experiences in provider sites outside the hospital, coupled with their unique clinical IT priorities, point to a need to address the challenges faced by these types of providers in order to propel the sector's growth.

"Health IT continues to be a bright spot in the U.S. economy," said Lorren Pettit, vice president, health information systems and research for HIMSS. "Health IT workers continue to see strong demand for their skills, as employers across the provider and vendor/consultant spectrum embrace various health IT strategic initiatives. But the specific hurdles faced by some sectors suggest that the health IT field will need to creatively address its expansion outside the hospital walls."

Key findings include:

- **Demand for health IT talent leaves employers struggling.** The majority of health IT employers (61 percent of vendors/consultants and 43 percent of providers) have positions they are looking to fill. The findings suggest the demand for health IT workers is strong, as evidenced by the fact that only 32 percent of vendors / consultant organizations, and 38 percent of provider organizations, claim they are fully staffed.
- **The majority of health IT employers grew or at least maintained the size of their IT workforce over the past year.** 61 percent of vendors/consultants and 42 percent of providers reported IT staffing increases, and the majority of respondents across both groups expect to further increase or hold steady over the next year.
- **IT budgets continue to rise.** Although projections are not uniform between the two groups, the majority of providers (56 percent) and vendors/consultants (87 percent) project increases in their IT budgets this year.
- **A significant disconnect exists between providers and vendors/consultants on certain select clinical IT priorities** – notably electronic health records (EHRs). Vendors/consultants seem to be "moving on" to other issues, whereas providers appear to be wrestling with how to best leverage their existing EHR investments.



- **However, the stakeholder groups are generally aligned on the biggest priorities facing those leveraging clinical IT**, including privacy/security, care coordination, culture of care and population health.

The 2017 Leadership and Workforce Survey reflects the responses of 368 U.S. health IT leaders between late November 2016 and early January 2017. [Download the complete report.](#)

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