MARKLE

Markle Survey on Health in a Networked Life 2010

October 2010

The *Markle Survey on Health in a Networked Life 2010* directly examines the attitudes of the U.S. public and physicians at the outset of federal health IT stimulus and health care reform.

Two surveys were conducted August 10–26, 2010 by Knowledge Networks. The survey methodology is on Page 3.

Blue button now available at the My HealtheVet Web site: www.myhealth.va.gov.

SNAPSHOT:

The Public and Doctors Agree with 'Blue Button' Idea

A new Markle survey found that most of the U.S. public and doctors believe patients should be able to download and keep copies of their personal health information. That's the simple idea behind a blue button. This fall, for the first time, American veterans gained that ability, with a blue button that allows them to download their pertinent health information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Medicare beneficiaries will similarly have a blue button to download their claims information. Government has demonstrated what should be possible for health care consumers everywhere.

With billions in new federal funds encouraging increased use of information technology to improve health and cost-effectiveness, incentives now exist to make this basic capability available to everyone.

About 70% of patients and 65% of doctors agree that patients should be able to download and keep their own copies of their personal health information. This shows remarkable agreement behind the concept of a blue button.

KEY FINDING: Roughly 2 in 3 members of the public and doctors agreed that patients should be able to download and keep copies of their own personal health information.

Agree 70%			Neutral 22%	Disagree 7%

The Public

Agree 65%		Neutral 20%	Disagree 15%
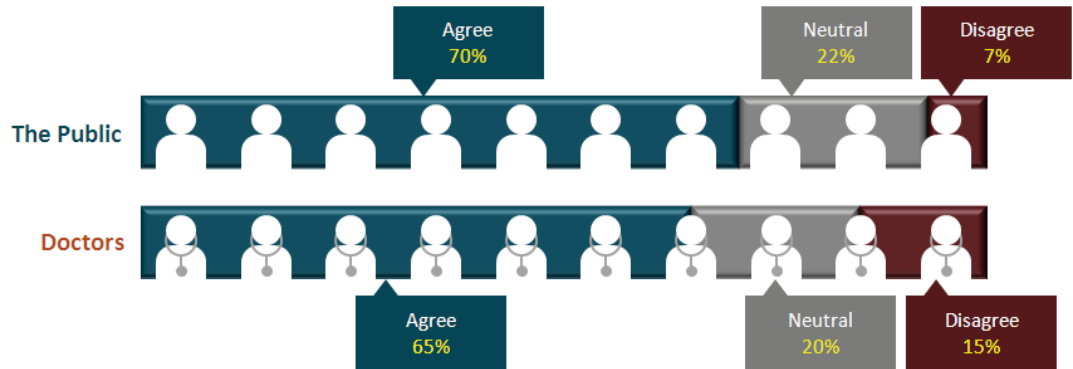
Doctors

Majority of Public Says Delivering Electronic Copies to Patients is Important Part of Health IT Incentives Program

Overwhelming majorities of the public and doctors express importance of privacy safeguards

New federal rules require health care providers and hospitals to give patients electronic copies of their lists of medications, after-visit summaries, lab results, and other pertinent information in order to qualify for an estimated $27 billion in federal subsidies for using health information technology. The program, now being rolled out as required by the Recovery Act, is designed to make the sharing of patient information more efficient.

KEY FINDING: Most of the public and nearly half of the doctors surveyed said that for the billions of dollars in federal incentives to be well-spent, it's important to set requirements that participating doctors and hospitals supply patients with electronic copies of their medical information.

Requiring that patients receive secure online copies of their health information from the participating doctors and hospitals is…

Important 62%		Neutral 28%	Not important 8%

The Public

| Important 49%		Neutral 29%	Not important 21%
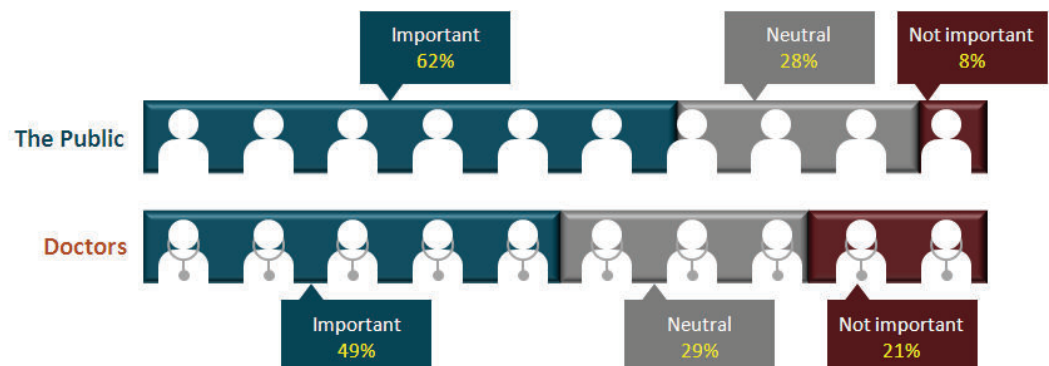
Doctors

KEY FINDING: When asked about requirements necessary to make sure that federal incentive money for health IT is well-spent, more than 80 percent of both the public and doctors surveyed said requirements for privacy safeguards were important.

Requiring protections and safeguards for patient privacy is...

	Important	Neutral	Not important
The Public	81%	15%	2%
Doctors	84%	10%	6%
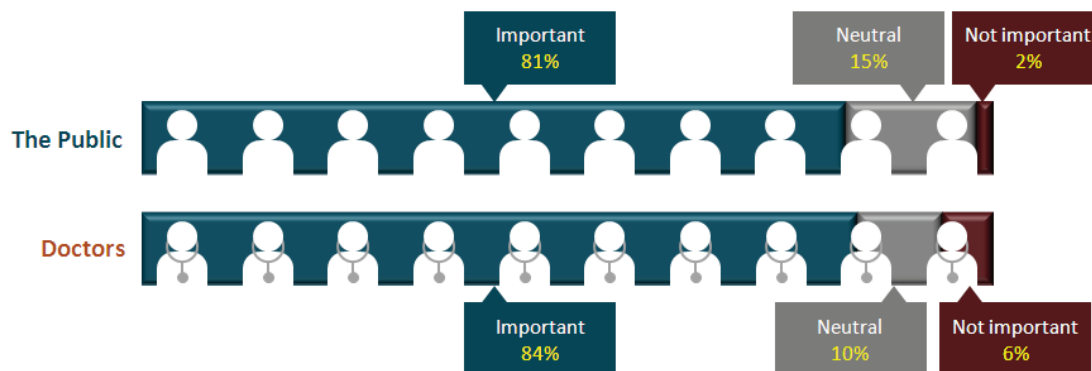
KEY FINDING: Ninety-three percent of the public rarely or never ask for copies of their personal health information or medical records in electronic format, and doctors agree that they seldom get such requests from their patients.

How often do you | your patients ask for copies of personal health information or medical records in electronic format?

The Public
- 6% Sometimes or more
- 93% Rarely or never

Doctors
- 8% Sometimes or more
- 92% Rarely or never
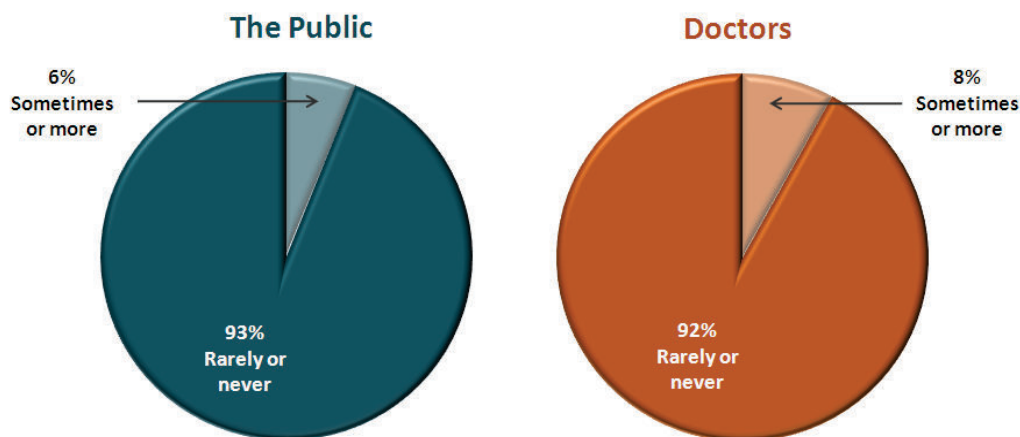
Methodology. Markle commissioned two separate but coordinated surveys with largely parallel questions to be conducted independently by Knowledge Networks (KN).

General Population Sample. An initial sample of 2,463 people was drawn randomly from KN's KnowledgePanel, a probability-based Web panel designed to be representative of the US non-institutionalized population age 18 and up, including both online and offline households (households are provided access to the Internet and hardware if needed). From the initial sample, 1,582 responded to this online survey—a completion rate of 63 percent. The survey was conducted August 10 through August 24, 2010.

Physician Sample. An initial sample of 2,867 physicians was drawn from Knowledge Networks Physicians Consulting Network, an online opt-in convenience panel consisting of physician members invited to join from reputable listed samples, such as the AMA Masterfile and prescriber lists. From the initial sample, 779 physicians responded to this online survey—a completion rate of 27 percent. The physician survey was conducted August 10 through August 26, 2010. The panel generally reflects the US physician population on known demographics, although it somewhat under-represents younger physicians and hospital-based physicians. The study sample consisted of 26 percent primary care doctors (defined as internal medicine, general practice, or family practice) and 74 percent specialists.

The general population sample can validly be projected to the US population, with margin of error of +/- 3.0 percent. Although we believe the physician sample is a highly defensible reflection of US physicians, because it was not drawn entirely by random we are not as comfortable projecting its results to all US physicians. Because the sample is based on those who were invited to join from multiple sources without known probabilities of selection, estimates of theoretical sampling error cannot be calculated.

Conclusions

- This snapshot from the *Markle Survey on Health in a Networked Life 2010* indicates a very low baseline of individuals requesting electronic copies of the personal health information today. However, it also shows a quite high level of agreement among the U.S. public and physicians that patients ought to be able to download their records online.

- The health IT subsidies under the Recovery Act are designed in part to improve patient engagement by providing them with electronic copies of their pertinent information, such as lists of medications, results of labs, and summaries of doctor visits.

- With U.S. veterans now gaining access to a blue button, with Medicare beneficiaries soon to follow, with new health IT subsidies designed in part to provide individuals with more convenient access to their information — the time is right to raise awareness about this simple capability.

- As with past Markle surveys, we found that privacy protections are a high priority for public support of health IT, with more than 80 percent of the public and doctors calling it an important part of the health IT incentives program for the taxpayer money to be well-spent.

- The Markle Connecting for Health collaborators recently published a set of privacy practices for the blue button download capability supported by 50 organizations representing technology companies, insurers, provider groups, and consumer and privacy advocates. Those practices are part of the Markle Common Framework for Networked Personal Health Information, which recommends policy and technology safeguards to encourage individual access to information and privacy. ■

MARKLE
Advancing Health in a Connected World