Key Benefits, Challenges of EHR Software Revealed in Survey
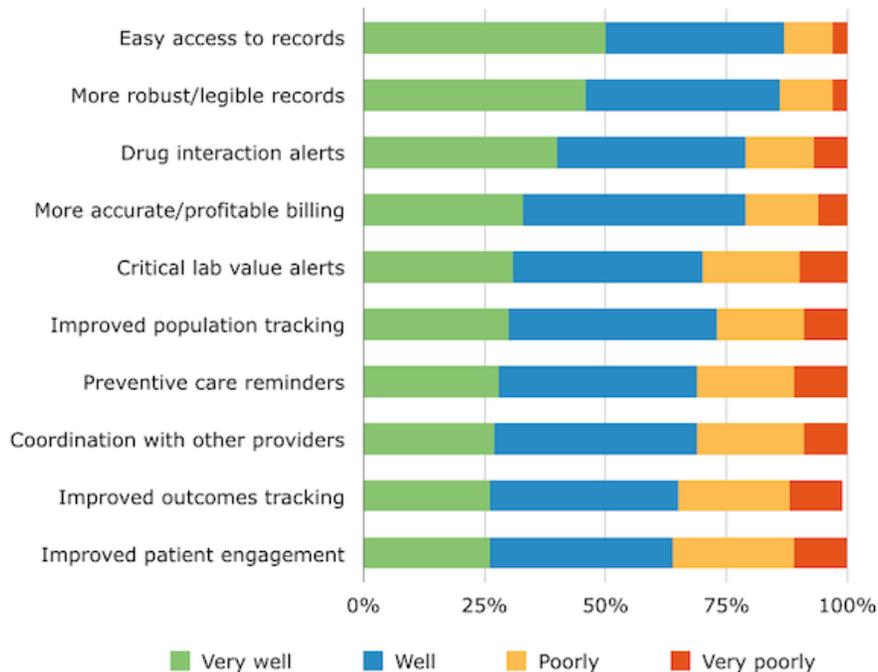
by Kathy McCoy

Some of the commonly held beliefs about EHRs, including their benefits and key challenges, were brought into question by a recent survey by industry software review site Software Advice. The survey, conducted in collaboration with leading data collection company Research Now, surveyed nearly 400 medical practices regarding their experiences with EHR software. Among the findings on key benefits were that 87 percent of respondents said their EHR offers easy access to records, with 86 percent saying that their EMR software offers more legible and/or robust records.

A majority of survey respondents also indicated that they felt their EHRs delivered "very well" or "well" in areas including drug interaction alerts, more accurate/profitable billing, and critical lab value alerts.

Surprisingly, even though interference with patient engagement has been widely reported in industry publications as a major issue, the majority of survey respondents said that their EHR delivered in that area "very well" or "well."

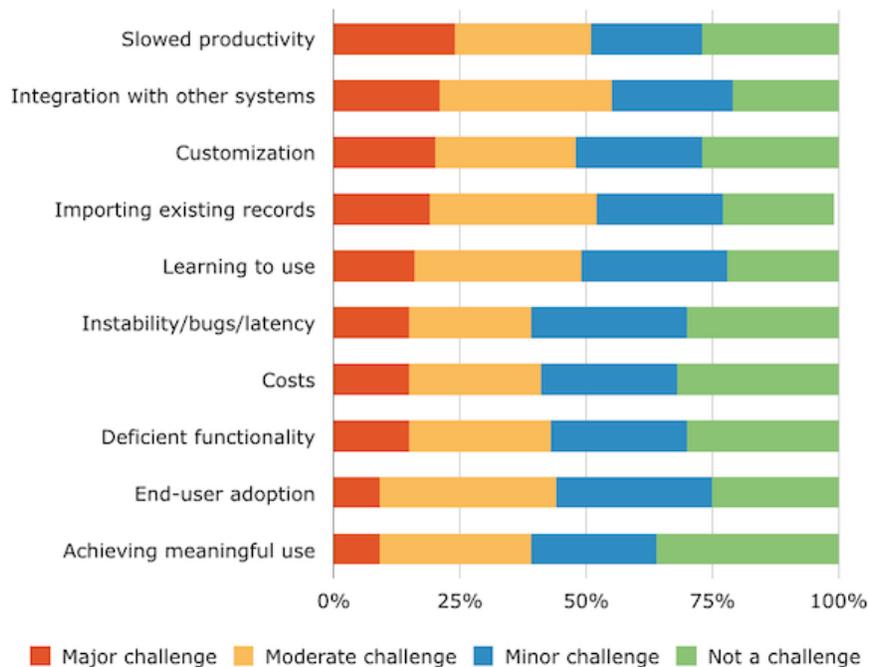**How Well EHR Software Delivers on Key Benefits**

Key Challenges Include Productivity and Poor Integration

The survey also asked practices to rate common challenges of EHR software use. This section of the survey revealed that slowed productivity and integration with other systems were perceived as being the greatest challenges, with 51 percent reporting slowed productivity as a major or moderate challenge and 55 percent listing integration as a major or moderate challenge.

 "Achieving Meaningful Use" was rated as #10 in the list of top 10 challenges surveyed, which was surprising considering the low number of providers who have attested for Meaningful Use Stage 2. Only 9 percent ranked Meaningful Use as a major challenge, and 30 percent rated it as a moderate challenge.

Top 10 Challenges Faced by EHR Software Users

Source: Software Advice

How MediTouch Addresses These Challenges

We're not surprised to learn that slowed productivity is seen as the top challenge of using EHRs, as this has been fairly widely reported in industry media. We're pleased to say that HealthFusion has made eliminating this problem one of our key goals since we introduced

MediTouch, working extensively with our users to streamline processes and improve productivity.

In fact, as one of our users, Kim Allmon of AMS Neurology, says, "There are many enhancements coming out on a fairly regular basis, which tells us that HealthFusion is listening to the needs of their users. It's very user-friendly and easy to link documents. "

On the issue of integration with other systems, we are also leading the way, having conducted successful interoperability tests with two other major systems recently: First, at the invitation of Surescripts, we participated in a landmark showcase event that demonstrated the secure exchange of patient records via the Direct Method email protocol at the HIMSS 2014 conference in February. Second, we recently successfully completed a real-time data exchange between Miami Children's Hospital's (MCH) hospital information system and the P.E.D.S. EHR Office Edition Electronic Medical Records based on HealthFusion's MediTouch EHR.

In addition, MediTouch provides fully integrated medical software, with EHR, medical billing software, patient portal software and claims clearinghouse all included. This full integration streamlines exchange of data between functional areas and speeds productivity.

For more information about the benefits and challenges of EHR software, download a free copy of our interactive guide, The Top 12 "Must Haves" When Selecting Your EHR/PM Software.