Survey: Widening IT Divide in Healthcare

Despite the proliferation of high-tech medical gadgets and systems, a new U.S.-wide survey finds the digital divide is growing wider. Notably over the last 12 months patient adoption of healthcare technology dropped -- amid data hacking fears and a perceived lack of privacy protection by healthcare providers, according to the study by Black Box.

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The survey, "Healthcare's Digital Divide Widens," revealed that 50 percent of consumers with access to hospital, physician or ancillary provider's technology in 2016 indicated being sceptical of the overall benefits of technologies such as patient portals, mobile apps and electronic health records.

For the study, Black Book asked 12,090 consumers across the country to evaluate the technology they were exposed to, know of or interacted with as an active patient in the last 12 months.

The survey also found that the fear of breaches translated to consumers being hesitant to share information. Eighty-seven person of consumers surveyed indicated they would hesitate to share their information.

Black Book found respondents especially alarmed that their prescriptions, mental health notes, and chronic conditions were being shared not only with their healthcare provider, but also with retailers, employers, and the government without their knowledge.

Other key findings of the national survey:

- 70 percent of Americans distrust health technology, indicating a steep climb from 10 percent in 2014
- Incomplete patient records that raise questions about analytics
- Overworked staff, especially in small hospitals, where it's more difficult for both providers and nurses to find time or have the training for patient portals and other engagement technology
- Physicians get overwhelmed with too much information ; they note that at times   data are redundant and unlikely to make a clinical difference

Black Book concluded that patient technology illiteracy is the next roadblock to achieving population health success.

Source: Healthcare IT News
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