

# No more dithering on e-health

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Canada is lagging behind many countries in the use of electronic health records and it is critical that the country's medical and political leaders set targets for universal adoption, states an editorial in *CMAJ*.

While Canada has invested more than \$1.6 billion in federal funds to develop integrated electronic health records, only 37% of general practitioners use electronic records compared with 97% in New Zealand and 95% in Australia.

Canada Health Infoway, the organization created to build a national infrastructure for electronic health records, has set a goal to have all health records "available" to their health care providers, although this does not mean that they will be used or compatible across the country.

"So after billions of dollars and nearly a decade of by Infoway and the provinces, Canada is well back of the electronic records pack," write Dr. Paul Hebert, *CMAJ* Editor-in-Chief and coauthors Kimberlyn McGrail and Michael Law of the University of British Columbia.

The lack of electronic health records also threatens patient safety and the authors recommend mandating use of the system.

"Given the ongoing threats to patient safety, it is critical that our medical and political leaders set timely targets for the universal adoption of electronic health records for all professionals, especially in [primary care](#), write the authors. "Unfortunately, mandating the use of [electronic health records](#) may be the only way to avoid long delays."

Provided by Canadian Medical Association Journal

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