

IPAs and PHOs viable option for small independent practices

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For small and medium-size independent practices, sharing care management and information technology resources with other practices through an independent practice association or physician-hospital organization is a viable alternative and may improve care for patients with chronic conditions, according to a study published in the August issue of *Health Affairs*.

(HealthDay)—For small and medium-size independent practices, sharing care management and information technology resources with other practices through an independent practice association (IPA) or physician-hospital organization (PHO) is a viable alternative and may improve care for patients with chronic conditions, according to a study published in the August issue of *Health Affairs*.

Using data from a survey of 1,164 practices with fewer than 20 physicians, Lawrence P. Casalino, M.D., Ph.D., from Weill Cornell

Medical College in New York City, and colleagues examined the extent to which IPAs and PHOs might make it possible to share resources and improve care.

The researchers found that nearly a quarter (23.8 percent) of the practices surveyed were considered participants in an IPA or PHO and reported that a considerable proportion of their [patients](#) were received through an IPA or PHO. Compared with nonparticipating practices, practices that participated in these organizations provided nearly three times as many care management processes for patients with [chronic conditions](#) (10.4 versus 3.8), half of which were only provided by IPAs or PHOs.

"The data presented in this article suggest that IPAs and PHOs may be able to provide an additional, potentially viable organizational alternative during an era of major changes in how health care is delivered and paid for," the authors write.

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