Survey Shows Deep Hospital Executive Concerns Over ACOs, EHRs

A survey of 206 hospital executives finds deep concerns about accountable care organization models, and big worries about electronic health records systems that nearly all respondents have or are implementing.

Consultancy Purdue Healthcare Advisors conducted the survey of executives at the director level and above. Findings show that 20 percent have implemented an ACO-like model at their hospital and 46 percent have no plans in the near future to join the ACO ranks.

The executives find ACOs to be unstable and financially risky, according to Purdue Healthcare Advisors, with 52 percent of respondents wanting to see stronger evidence of benefits and a consistency of successful models. Almost half view their hospital as too small to support an ACO, 26 percent believe the investment outweighs current benefits, and 13 percent said performance benchmarks are not realistic for their facility.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents worry about being able to address cost pressures from lower patient volume and reimbursement rates, and other unknowns associated with the health care reform law. Sixty percent are focused on reducing waste and inefficiencies, 19 percent are considering staff and salary reductions and 15 percent are working to improve the quality of care.

Responding hospital executives--90 percent of whom are completing or have completed Stage 1 or Stage 2 of meaningful use--have many concerns about their EHRs with interoperability, data retrieval and analytics, staff readiness, patient engagement and data breaches among the most worrisome.