Health Information Technology (HIT) is the wave of the future. Like it or not, electronic medical records (EMR) will likely be implemented in most medical practices within the next five years.

The primary beneficiary of EMR will be the patient. The quality of the patient’s healthcare experience will improve because EMR will create a structure for a disease-management approach to caring for patients. All members of a patient’s care team will have full access to the patient’s complete chart as they each see the patient. This will reduce medical errors, reduce redundant testing, and reduce health care costs by cutting back on paperwork and administrative expenses. Overall public health will also benefit from EMR by providing early detection of disease outbreak and improved tracking of chronic disease management.

Whether it’s by government mandate or whether HIT is adopted willingly and embraced by physicians and patients—it is important for physicians to be vocal and participate in this process. Physicians could be particularly helpful in shaping the HIT system as it pertains to privacy concerns. These concerns should be addressed before any federal or physician endorsement.