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Designing EMR for Patient or Doctor?

A physician writing in The Wall Street Journal thought electronic medical records were a good idea until she used one. She writes, “Tasks that once took seconds to perform on paper now require multi-stepped points and clicks through a maze of menus.” She says they’re entering reams of unnecessary data for government number crunchers. Another doctor told her the process seems to be “all about taking care of the chart” not the patient.

This is what government calls their “meaningful use” mandate of the electronic medical record. But isn’t the record for patient care? The government now wants to make the record easy for patients to read. But shouldn’t they first repeal “meaningful use” so the record is easy for doctors to use?