

## **2007 Annual Survey of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Services Summary Finger Lakes Region**

In March 2008, the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA) conducted a survey of MRI services in the region (Monroe, Central Finger Lakes and Southern Tier Counties) to evaluate the impact of recent additions to capacity and to determine the extent to which MRI utilization has continued to increase at the pace observed in recent years. This summary describes MRI resources and utilization.

### Number of Machines:

As of December 31, 2007, there were 34 MRI units operational within the 9-county Finger Lakes region; unfortunately no new data was available regarding one of these units. To provide consistency in analysis of trends over time, last year's data was used for this unit.

Hospital-based MRI units comprised 64.7% (22 units) of the total for the region and freestanding diagnostic imaging centers accounted for the other 35.3% (12 units). Of the hospital-based MRI units, 59% are stationary and 41% are mobile. The majority of MRI units (82%) are 1.5T in power, with 15% at lower levels of power (1.0T, 0.7T, and 0.3T) and one unit (3%) at 3.0T.

There were no changes to MRI capacity in 2007, but three new MRI units are expected to be added in 2008: Strong Memorial Hospital has received local and CON approval for a 1.0T "open" unit; Rochester General Hospital was approved for an additional 1.5T unit; and University Medical Imaging obtained local approval to obtain a 3.0T unit. Geneva General Hospital plans to obtain a stationary unit to replace their existing mobile MRI; this request has been approved locally and is pending a decision from the NY State Department of Health.

### Utilization:

Based on the survey responses, 100,140 MRI studies were performed during 2007, which represents a 4% reduction in utilization from calendar year 2006 to 2007. As noted in previous survey summaries and illustrated in Figure 1, the rate of growth in MRI utilization has been slowing since 2001 (see *Figure 1*). The decline in the growth of utilization from 2000 to 2001 is thought to have occurred after the Rochester Individual Practice Association initiated clinical appropriateness reviews of radiology procedures. The decline in utilization in 2007 may reflect nationwide trends – MRI use throughout the U.S. increased only 3% in 2007 – or may reflect the impact of the announcement that local insurers would institute more stringent prior authorization processes for imaging procedures, including MRI imaging.

Figure 1: Annual Percent Change in MRI Utilization for Finger Lakes Region

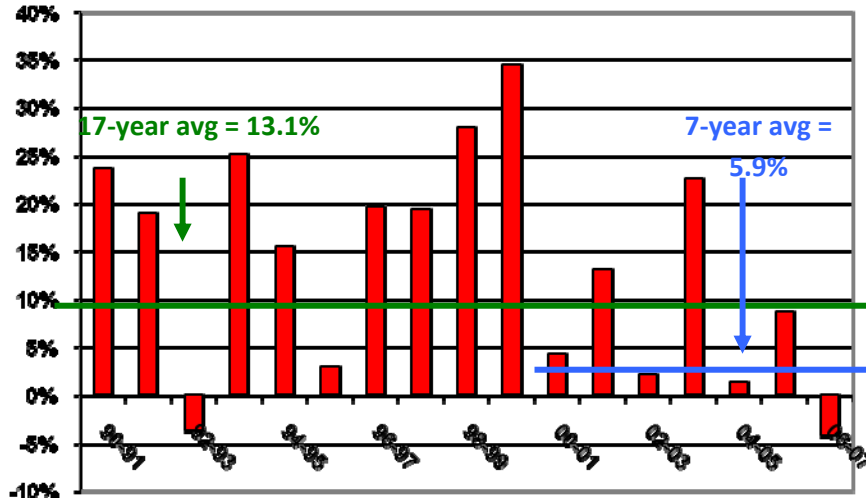
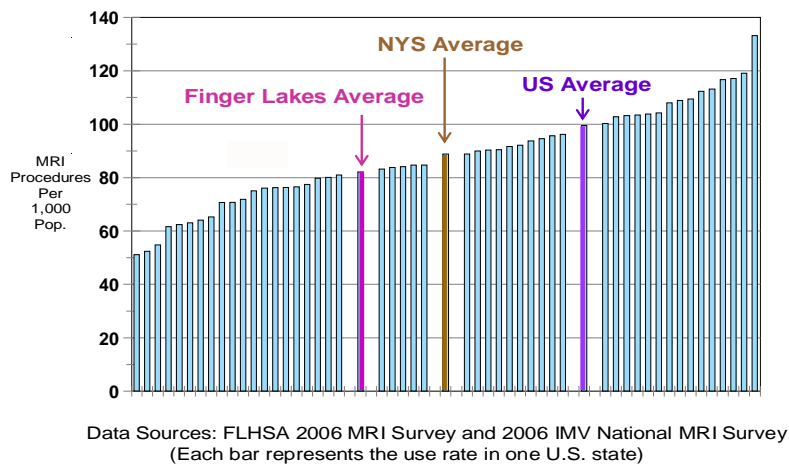


Figure 2 illustrates that MRI utilization remains lower in the Finger Lakes than in the rest of NY State and in the nation:

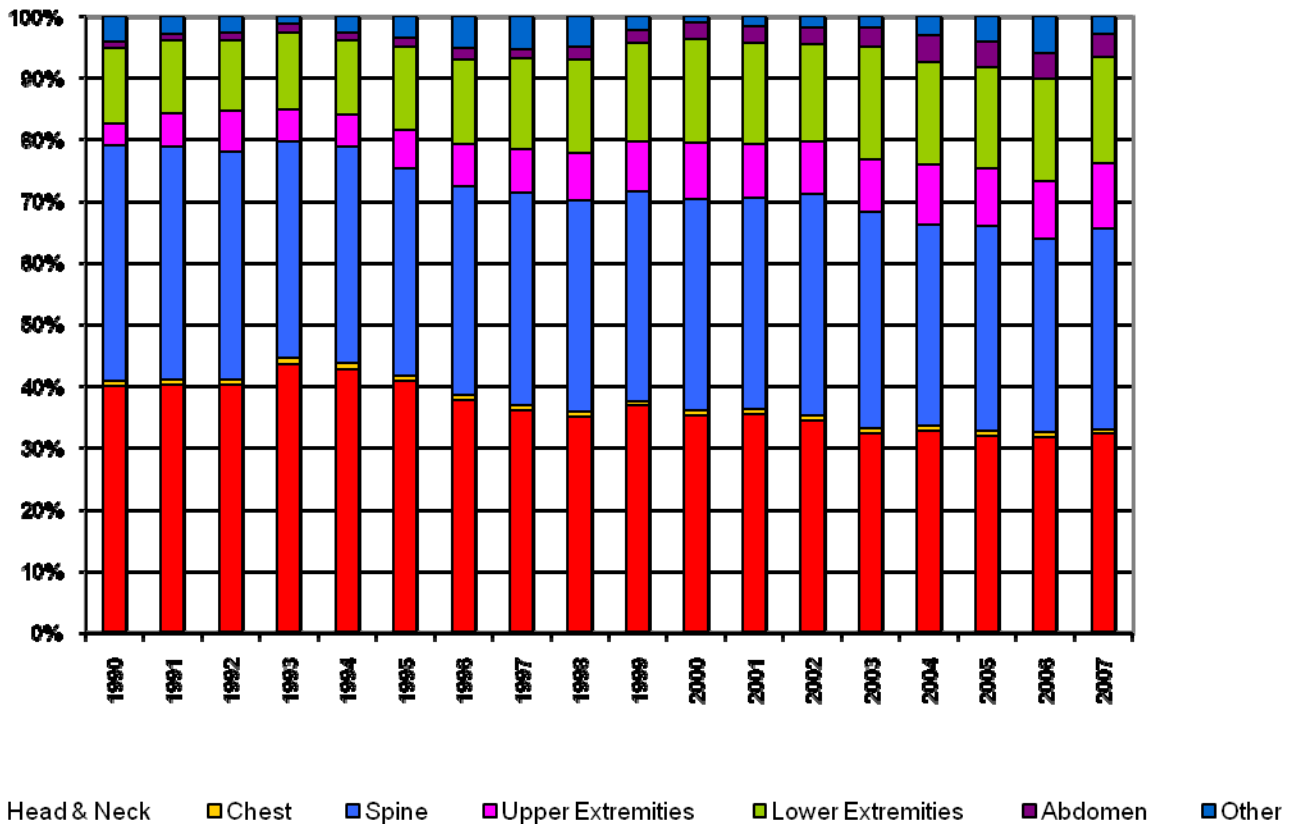
Figure 2: Average MRI Utilization in 2006 in the Finger Lakes Region, New York State, and U.S.



(2006 was the most recent year for which U.S. MRI utilization data was available)

Of interest are changes in utilization by body site (Figure 3). Over the past 17 years, the percent of head/neck and spine/pelvis studies has decreased, while the percent of abdomen, upper and lower extremities studies has grown.

**Figure 3: Percent MRI Utilization by Body Site**



However, the proportion of local studies for head and neck and spine, over 60% of MRI procedures, is much higher locally than for the U.S. as a whole; nationally, only 45% of MRI procedures are performed on these body sites.

While still a small portion of total MRI utilization locally (1.18%), imaging of the breast increased by 204% between 2004 and 2007. One local provider has a unit dedicated solely to breast MRI scanning. Breast imaging has also increased nationally to approximately 2% of all MRI procedures, suggesting that additional growth may be expected.