



NEWS RELEASE

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Federally-Issued ID Numbers Violate Patient Privacy

*Twila Brase of Citizens' Council for Health Freedom
Says Unique Patient Identifiers Are Meant to Track Patients and Doctors*

St. Paul, Minn.— As proponents of a national health care system push their agenda, issues about the privacy of patient data are at the forefront of the debate.

One angle of the health care conversation that is getting renewed life is the issue of **Unique Patient Identifiers** , or a unique number for every patient issued by the federal government to link together patient data to create a comprehensive life-long patient medical record for each patient. Industry groups are concerned about correctly matching patients with their electronic health care data.

However the creation of a UPI has essentially been prohibited since 1999. Therefore, according to a Bureau of National Affairs publication, health information technology groups are now urging Congress to repeal the current prohibition against using federal funds to develop a standard for unique patient identification, or at least study the problem of patient-data mismatches and potential solutions.

Patient advocate *Twila Brase*, president of *Citizens' Council for Health Freedom*, a patient-centered national health policy organization based in St. Paul, Minn. , says that these federally-issued patient identification numbers violate patient privacy and the confidential patient-doctor relationship.

“Many think that the Unique Patient Identifier (UPI) was established by HIPAA in 1996 to protect privacy,” Brase said, “but in actuality, it was created to pry into the lives of patients and exert control over doctors through outside analysis and unconsented use of very private patient data.”

Brase testified in Chicago at the only hearing thus far on the UPIs in 1998. Covered by the *New York Times* back then, the issue is gaining steam again, as proponents want to create a unique number for every individual that will attempt to bring all of a person's medical records together through the proposed National Health Information Network.

“The Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom has opposed the National Health Information Network since Day One,” Brase said. “President Bush Executive Ordered it in April 2004, and President Obama gave it about \$23 billion dollars through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which calls for doctor and hospitals to have interoperable electronic medical records by 2015 or have their Medicare payments reduced. The data will be used to monitor patients, track physician compliance with government-issued treatment protocols and financially penalize the non-compliant.”

The controversial initiative, Brase added, is also an intrusive and unconstitutional interference in the patient-doctor relationship.

“On Fourth Amendment grounds alone the National Health Information Network and Unique Patient Identifiers ought to be illegal,” the patient freedom advocate said.

The UPI was established under the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), but it received significant pushback from advocacy groups concerned about patient privacy. A prohibition on the use of federal funds to create the UPI was added to federal law in 1999 by Congressman Ron Paul. Health technology organization are now asking Congress to repeal that prohibition.

Twila Brase broadcasts a daily, 60-second radio feature, ***Health Freedom Minute***, which brings health care issues to light for the American public. ***Health Freedom Minute*** airs on the entire American Family Radio Network, more than 150 stations nationwide. During the daily features, **listeners can learn more about the agenda behind proposed health care initiatives and policies and what they can do to protect their health care choices, rights and privacy.**

Brase, a public health nurse and health care freedom advocate, informs listeners of crucial health issues, such as the intrusive wellness and prevention initiatives in Obamacare, patient privacy and the need for informed consent requirements, the dangers of “evidence-based medicine” and the implications of state and federal health care reform.

Health Freedom Minute is sponsored by the ***Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom***, a freedom-focused, patient-centered national health care organization based in St. Paul, Minn. ***CCHF*** supports patient and doctor freedom, medical innovation and the right of citizens to a confidential patient-doctor relationship.

For more information about ***Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom***, visit www.cchfreedom.org.

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For more information or to interview Twila Brase, president and co-founder of Citizens' Council for Health Freedom, contact Michael Hamilton, Hamilton Strategies, 215.519.4838, 610.584.1096, MHamilton@HamiltonStrategies.com

*Twila Brase is president and co-founder of the **Citizens' Council for Health Freedom**. She has been called one of the "100 Most Powerful People in Health Care" and one of "Minnesota's 100 Most Influential Health Care Leaders." The Council's efforts have stopped government-issued treatment directives, added informed consent requirements for access to patient data and defeated a proposed Health Insurance Exchange. Brase's daily radio commentary, **Health Freedom Minute**, is a 60-second radio address on pressing health care issues.*

Brase has been interviewed by CNN, Fox News, Minnesota Public Radio, NBC Nightly News, NBC's Today Show, NPR, New York Public Radio, the Associated Press, Modern Healthcare, TIME, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The Washington Times, among others.