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CONTACT:
Michael Hamilton, Hamilton Strategies, 215.519.4838, 610.584.1096, MHamilton@HamiltonStrategies.com

Affordable Care Act Allows Americans’ Private Info to Be Stored and Accessed In Massive Federal Database

Twila Brase of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom

Says New Federal System of Records is a Frightening Intrusion on Our Privacy

St. Paul, Minn.—One patient advocate has many concerns about Obamacare and the new state exchanges being created to implement the Affordable Care Act.

But perhaps the most pressing concern for Twila Brase, co-founder of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom, is the federal “System of Records (SRO),” an expansive, government-run database that will store Americans’ private information through the state exchanges.

“Americans have been hearing about the Federal Data Services Hub, where personal and private data is gathered on Americans, including employment, health status, personal identity, citizenship, criminal history, enrollment in entitlement programs and residency,” Brase said. “But even more intrusive than the hub is the actual database where the information will be stored long-term,” Brase continued. “Regulations for the federal System of Records were released February 6 and finalized March 6, and private patient information—like how much money we made last year, our employer’s name and our ethnicity will be included.”

“What makes us think that the the IRS, who is currently being sued for improperly accessing 60 million medical records of 10 million Americans, will treat these private records any differently?” Brase continues. “This type of government surveillance is unacceptable and we must refuse to participate by not allowing federal government agencies and even more specifically the IRS, to capture, store, access and share our private information.”

Data collection is extensive. According to the document made public online by the U.S. Government Printing Office, the following information will be maintained in the database (“but may not be limited to”): name, mailing address, residential address, date of birth, Social Security Number, taxpayer status, gender, ethnicity, Indian status, incarceration status, residency, email address, telephone number, participation in health insurance programs, enrollment in employer-sponsored coverage, employer information, veteran status, status on pregnancy, blindness and disabilities, household income, tax return information from the IRS and financial information from third-party sources. Also included is citizenship and immigration status and details about enrollment in programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Health Administration programs and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
Further information about the federal System of Records, obtained directly from this government document, includes:

- All records are stored on magnetic media.
- “CMS may release information from the HIX without the consent of the individual to whom such information pertains.”
- Those able to access the records have been trained in the Privacy Act and have been instructed not to release data until appropriate time. However, the database can be accessed by CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) personnel and private contractors who have the passwords.
- The Health Insurance Exchange program established by CMS, through this database, will “collect, create, use and disclose PII (personally identifiable information) that will enable HHS to perform oversight and enforcement activities of QHP Issuers offering qualified health plans through the FFE. In addition, HHS, and any contractors assisting HHS, will use PII from the system to assist in accomplishing CMS functions relating to the purposes of this collection and who need to have access to the records in order to assist CMS.” Some records will be maintained for up to 10 years; others will be kept longer.
- Information from the database will be disclosed to other federal or state agencies, non-profit entities or fiscal agents to determine eligibility for enrollment in a health plan, to carry out the Health Insurance Exchange Program, and could be included when notifying employers under section 1411(f) of the Affordable Care Act.

Brase has written a list of the “Top Ten Terribles of Health Insurance Exchanges,” which include higher costs, privacy intrusions, more red tape, and poor care and coverage. The full list is available on the CCHF web site at http://www.cchfreedom.org/.

Twila Brase shares health care-related news with the American public in her daily, 60-second radio feature, Health Freedom Minute. Health Freedom Minute airs on the entire American Family Radio Network, with more than 150 stations nationwide, in addition to Bott Radio Network with over 80 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. As a public health nurse and health care freedom advocate, she 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 or to sign up for the weekly CCHF Health eNews, visit www.cchfreedom.org.

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For more information about the federal System of Records or to interview Twila Brase, president and co-founder of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom, contact Deborah Hamilton, Hamilton Strategies, 215.815.7716, 610.584.1096, DHamilton@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. She 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.