***NEWS RELEASE***

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Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom Celebrates Victories for Patient Rights in 2014

Baby DNA Votes, Lawsuits, HIPAA Stories and Obamacare Breakdowns Pave the Way for More Freedom in 2015

ST. PAUL, Minn.—This past year was perhaps one of the most crucial in history regarding patient rights and privacy, as important issues such as government health care, the storage of and research on baby DNA and federal biosurveillance plans all made headlines.

“We’ve seen many positive things happen this year that will protect patients’ rights and their privacy,” said Twila Brase, president and co-founder of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF, www.cchfreedom.org), a Minnesota-based national organization dedicated to preserving patient-centered health care and protecting patient and privacy rights. “But there is still much work to do, as government, insurance companies and research organizations get bigger every day and demand to know more and more about every American—both young and old—including our private health information. This data is being used to impose controls over physicians’ treatment decisions, limiting patient access to personalized medical treatment.”

Brase shared these victories and headlines that made an impact on health care and patient privacy this year:

December 2014

• In a new report titled “The HIPAA Privacy Deception,” CCHF shares stories of how signing the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) form at doctors’ offices, hospitals and clinics can hurt patients. The report details the lack of privacy due to HIPAA and shares 12 personal stories from real people who legally refused to sign the so-called HIPAA privacy form—and what happened when they did.
• The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives pass an amendment to the “Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization Act of 2014,” which requires that parents give informed consent before their babies’ DNA can be used for federally funded research. CCHF, which has been advocating on both the state and national levels for parental
consent requirements for the storage and use of newborn blood samples, was directly involved in the creation of the amendment.

- The state of Vermont cancels its single payer health insurance system due to ballooning costs. The state would have had to add an 11.5 percent payroll tax and an additional income tax ranging all the way up to 9.5 percent to pay for the system.

**November 2014**

- Obamacare suffers a blow when Rich Weinstein exposes Affordable Care Act architect Jonathan Gruber and his true feelings about the deceptive government health care plan and the American people. Weinstein uncovers videos in which Gruber admits that Obamacare was pushed through by deceit and mocks the “stupidity” of Americans.
- The Supreme Court agrees to hear a case challenging the legality of Obamacare subsidies for states that rely on the federal exchange. CCHF, which filed an amicus brief in the case, says if the Court rules for the plaintiffs, the attempt at government-run health care will be gutted to its core because Obamacare needs premium subsidies to survive.
- South Dakota voters say yes to patient freedom via a measure that allows residents to decide if they will have the freedom to choose their own doctors and hospitals, rather than choose from providers inside a limited network, pay extra out-of-pocket expenses to see doctors outside the network, and travel long distances to see specialists.

**September 2014**

- A popular insurance provider, PreferredOne, pulls out of Minnesota’s health exchange, MNsure, stating that continuing into 2015 is “not sustainable.” Brase says the decision by PreferredOne is evidence that insurance companies have realized Obamacare is broken and can’t be fixed.

**August 2014**

- CCHF highlights the dangers of electronic health records after Community Health Systems, which operates 206 hospitals in 28 states, announces that hackers broke into its computer system and stole data on 4.5 million patients, including names, Social Security numbers, physical addresses, birthdays and telephone numbers. Brase shares that HealthCare.gov security has always been a concern and that electronic medical records under the interoperability mandate and HIPAA’s “no-privacy” rule share private patient data with entirely too many entities.
- CCHF releases an in-depth report on medical aid societies and their relevance as a flawed government health care system nears collapse. Medical aid societies are fraternal organizations in which people take care of each other through resource sharing. The report, titled “Safe Haven: How Mutual Aid Can Protect Families in Times of Trouble” is written by CCHF Senior Policy Fellow Greg Scandlen and shares how the collapse of governmental promises will spawn new and emerging forms of virtuous cooperation.
July 2014

- A government audit reveals 2.9 million data inconsistencies within the federal health care plan, including problems with Social Security numbers, income, family size or citizenship, which exposes enrollees to rules violations, technology issues and subsidy changes. Brase says the report is proof that Obamacare is not in the best interest of the American people, as it pulls their tax money into a system that doesn’t work and puts their private data at risk.

- The U.S. District Court of Appeals rules for the plaintiffs in *Halbig vs. Burwell*. The ruling has far-reaching implications, Brase says, as the plaintiffs in the case argued that per the actual language of the Affordable Care Act, subsidies to help Americans pay for government health care coverage are available only through state exchanges, not through the federal exchange at HealthCare.gov.

June 2014

- The U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of Hobby Lobby—a case that’s a win for business owners of closely held corporations with far-reaching implications on government health care. As a result of the 5-4 decision, Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., and other businesses whose leaders disagree with certain forms of birth control will not be forced to pay for the questionable methods for their employees.

- Florida passes a law prohibiting schools from scanning biometric information from students, as Gov. Rick Scott signs the ban that makes it unlawful for schools to collect palm scans, iris scans or fingerprints of students. Brase says the law is a victory in protecting private medical data. Florida, she adds, has set the bar high by becoming the first government to ban these types of scans.

May 2014

- *CCHF* alerts the country about the government’s new way to keep tabs on all Americans—through a sneaky biosurveillance plan that will track health records. The initiative would gather and analyze detailed health information that should be private and protected. Brase says biosurveillance proponents raise the guise of national security to hide the program’s real purpose: capturing the private medical data of every American for inclusion in a massive government database.

March 2014

- *CCHF* unveils a billboard campaign in five major markets across the U.S., sending the message about the “Obamacare Games—Where the Odds are Never in Your Favor.” The billboards also encourage drivers to visit a special section of *CCHF*’s web site, www.RefusetoEnroll.org. Online, citizens can sign a pledge stating they are opting out of “any and all participation in the national Obamacare Exchange system.”
January 2014

- **CCHF** highlights a hidden “14th Exemption” in Obamacare that, in essence, allows anyone who says they have a “hardship” to avoid being required to purchase health insurance under Obamacare or pay the penalty tax.

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