***NEWS RELEASE***

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CONTACT:
Deborah Hamilton, Hamilton Strategies, 215.815.7716, 610.584.1096, DHamilton@HamiltonStrategies.com

CCHF
Gathering Online Petitions to Stop Minnesota-Only EHR Mandate

Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom Says Electronic Health Records a Dangerous and Costly Mandate for Doctors and Patients

ST. PAUL, Minn.—As the new year began, doctors and mental health professionals discovered a troubling Minnesota mandate, the only one like it in the entire nation. On January 1, 2015, every health care provider in the State of Minnesota was required to employ an Electronic Health Records (EHR) system—which could cost tens of thousands of dollars and will compromise patients’ private medical information.

The mandate, says 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, is intrusive and costly for doctors and patients. But unlike every other state in the country under the 2009 federal EHR mandate, Minnesota has no opt-out option.

Therefore, CCHF is working to gather petition signatures to reverse the Minnesota-only mandate—and return health freedoms to both patients and doctors.

“Many are unaware of the Minnesota-only EHR mandate, but as practitioners find out, they are very unhappy at the idea of being unable to protect the privacy of their patients and being forced to pay thousands of dollars they can’t afford to buy a system they don’t want. One survey found mental health practitioners are planning to retire if forced to use the EHR,” said CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase. “EHRs change the way we interact with our doctors—and not in a positive way. The biggest concern is that entering private patient data into one large system, accessible by many, compromises patients’ privacy and security, as well as physician autonomy. Additionally, doctor’s offices and clinics could be forced to pay upwards of $15,000 to $70,000 to install and maintain these systems, plus a monthly fee. This endangers the independent practice of any practitioner and endangers patient willingness to be honest about their medical and mental health concerns.”

Minnesota newspapers The Star Tribune (“As health records go modern in Minnesota, a hitch”) and Pioneer Press/TwinCities.com (“Is your doctor’s office the most dangerous place for data?”) have both covered the dangers of mandated EHRs in the state.
On Feb. 17, Brase testified at a Minnesota House of Representatives Civil Law & Data Practices Committee hearing about the dangers of EHRs. Several others also testified, including a Minnesota resident who changed his doctor based on Electronic Health Records and two mental health professionals.

**CCHF** fought against the 2007 bill mandating interoperable EHRs, but the measure passed. Minnesota Statute §62J.495 states, “By January 1, 2015, all hospitals and health care providers must have in place an interoperable electronic health records system within their hospital system or clinical practice setting.” The EHR will be used “for sharing and synchronizing patient data across systems.”

As required by law, and reported on the Minnesota Department of Health web site, “The 2015 Mandate also defines interoperability through the requirement of connecting to a State-Certified Health Information Exchange (HIE) Service Provider.” This requires that every patient’s data be accessible online.

The mandate includes any health care provider who “provides a service that could be reimbursed by medical assistance, whether or not they accept these patients or receive payment for the service.” Therefore, Brase says, even patients who pay in cash without insurance coverage or other help like Medicaid or Medicare are still subject to having their data entered into the system.

**CCHF** is urging all Minnesotans to make their voices heard on health care privacy by signing the petition to repeal the state’s EHR mandate law.

For more information about **CCHF**, visit its web site at www.cchfreedom.org, its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cchfreedom or its Twitter feed @TwilaBrase.

**Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom** is a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn., that works to protect health care choices and patient privacy. **CCHF** sponsors the daily, 60-second radio feature, Health Freedom Minute, which airs on approximately 350 stations nationwide, including 200 on the American Family Radio Network and 100 on the Bott Radio Network. Listeners can learn more about the agenda behind health care initiatives and steps they can take to protect their health care choices, rights and privacy.

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For more information 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, or Beth Harrison, 610.584.1096, bharrison@hamiltonstrategies.com.