**NEWS RELEASE**

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10-Year Government Plan Will Share Private Patient Data

*Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom: Electronic Health Records Systems Endangers Patient Privacy*

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Earlier this summer, government health IT coordinators announced the formation of a 10-year electronic health records (EHR) interoperability plan that will allow even more government agencies access to Americans’ private medical data—all in the name of better patient care.

But medical professionals are finding that EHR projects that share private patient data with government agencies are not only intrusive—they’re dangerous.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette recently reported that errors while entering medical data in this huge system are common. Doctors and nurses have found the system is hard to work with and are reporting problems. According to the newspaper, “as electronic records and computerized physician-order entry systems take hold at hospitals and clinics across the country, complaints about those systems are on the rise.”

*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, says the new government report detailing how to move forward with EHR systems is ominous.

“Our government is funneling billions of dollars into systems that will dump all of our private medical records into one giant hub—accessible by many,” said CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase. “Doctors and nurses who have already started using these systems are not convinced that they are ready for use or even necessary. The government is touting these procedures as ways to streamline patient care, but they’re actually an attempt to capture and store Americans’ private medical data and share it with agencies that have nothing to do with health care.”

Those pushing electronic health record systems say EHRs will change the face of health care, improve patient outcomes and save money. But many in the medical profession have yet to see those benefits; instead, the systems are coming under increased scrutiny from doctors, nurses and lawmakers who say the technology is poorly regulated, unproven and unreliable—even with $25.8 billion in stimulus money being poured into the project. To that end, since 2011, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued nearly $24 billion to hospitals and clinics to upgrade their EHR systems and transition away from paper records.
In fact, the Post-Gazette also reported that last month “the nation’s largest union of registered nurses sent a letter to the FDA asking for broader and more stringent oversight of electronic records systems and of computerized physician-order entry systems, which allow clinicians to log treatment instructions for patients. The National Nurses United, as part of its broader campaign highlighting the potential dangers of ‘unproven medical technology,’ says FDA officials should test electronic medical records as rigorously as they might a new drug or an artificial hip implant.”

Government writers issued the interoperability vision paper, “Connecting Health and Care for the Nation: A 10-Year Vision to Achieve an Interoperable Health IT Infrastructure” in June, a companion piece to 2013’s “HHS Principles and Strategy for Accelerating Health Information Exchange,” that will serve as a roadmap of how hospitals and government agencies can share patients’ medical information.

Those working on the plan are taking public comments online at www.healthit.gov or via email through Sept. 12. Brase urges citizens who are concerned about the privacy breaches that a mass government data system will cause to submit a comment expressing their concern to ONC.request@hhs.gov:

After receiving feedback, the 10-year plan coordinators will present a new draft to Federal Advisory Committees for their input and recommendations in October.

Celebrating its 20th year, Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom is a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn. CCHF exists to protect health care choices and patient privacy. CCHF sponsors the daily, 60-second radio feature, Health Freedom Minute, which airs on more than 150 stations nationwide on the American Family Radio Network and 90-plus stations on the Bott Radio Network. Listeners can learn more about the agenda behind proposed health care initiatives and steps they can take to protect their health care choices, rights and privacy.

CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase, R.N., has been called one of the “100 Most Powerful People in Health Care” and one of “Minnesota’s 100 Most Influential Health Care Leaders.” Brase, a public health nurse, 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. She is at the forefront of informing the public of crucial health issues, such as intrusive wellness and prevention initiatives in Obamacare, patient privacy, informed consent, the dangers of “evidence-based medicine” and the implications of state and federal health care reform.

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.