

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Doctors and Nurses Burning Out Because of Mandated Electronic Health Records

Citizens' Council for Health Freedom: Congress' EHR Mandate Is Bad for Physicians—and Bad for Patients

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Many factors cause doctors to give up medicine, but none more prevalent than those that take physicians away from doing their true job—taking care of patients.

Labor Day is just around the corner, and medical professionals around the country are taking a hard look at how their occupations have changed. A [recent survey](#) on physician burnout and stress found that a fifth of doctors cited electronic health records (EHRs) as the top factor contributing to their stress. Earlier this month, two physicians at the University of California school of medicine [suggested the EHR mandate](#) is the most likely reason 54.4 percent of physicians are experiencing burnout.

[Citizens' Council for Health Freedom \(CCHF\)](#) identifies EHRs as a primary cause of burnout for both doctors and nurses, and in fact, *CCHF* president and co-founder Twila Brase has written an entire book on how EHRs harm patients, too.

“The EHR is causing doctors to leave their patients,” said Brase, author of [Big Brother in the Exam Room: The Dangerous Truth About Electronic Health Records](#), which was ranked the No. 1 Best Seller on Amazon last week in the Medical History and Records category. “Congress forced doctors to buy and use computerized record systems to collect and report patient data to the government. And it’s wreaking havoc on their practices and their patients.”

Brase pointed to the example of [Tom Davis, MD](#), who left his 25-year practice and 3,000 patients because of the “demands of data entry, the use of that data to direct care”—in other words, outside control of treatment decisions—“and [his] overall uncertainty about how medical data was used.”

“[Fifty-four percent](#) of physicians are affected by burnout, and the leading cause is the EHR,” Brase said. “One study found that doctors spend two hours at the computer for every hour they spend caring for patients. And a 2015 Mayo Clinic study found more than 7 percent of nearly 7,000 doctors had considered suicide in the past 12 months. About 400 physicians kill themselves every year. Burnout is not just bad for doctors and their families, it’s bad for patients. Congress must end the EHR mandate to ease this burnout epidemic and its dangers to patients and doctors.”

Brase adds in *“Big Brother in the Exam Room”* that the practice of medicine has become frustrating. A May 2013 Physicians Practice survey of 1,291 physicians found declining satisfaction, with only 54 percent satisfied with their EHRs, down from 63 percent in 2011.

Likewise, a [2018 survey](#) found 40 percent of doctors believe there are more challenges with EHRs than benefits, and 59 percent believe EHRs need a complete overhaul. [Modern Healthcare](#) also reported in 2015: “Nearly 3 in 5 (58 percent) respondents agreed that the EHR system in their organization was difficult to use; 71 percent felt health IT meant less time with patients. And more doctors than before said EHRs are negative influences in the quality of their care. In 2012, 5 percent felt that EHRs increased errors versus 12 percent today.”

“The difficulty of today’s EHRs is hitting physicians hard,” Brase says. “Nine years after the EHR mandate and its ‘meaningful use’ mandate were enacted, doctors are reported as saying that ‘[all the clicking saps intellectual power and concentration and blocks normal conversation](#)’ and that ‘[health care used to be about patients, nurses and doctors](#). Now it’s about insurers, lawyers and—most recently—IT people.”

Perhaps even worse, Brase says, colossal disasters of EHR implementation have occurred.

“One example is Contra Costa County, California, which spent \$45 million on ccLink, an EHR system to integrate all the county’s health departments,” Brase writes. “Doctors called ccLink ‘clunky and time-consuming, designed more for bureaucrats than physicians.’ Its systemic failure crushed morale. By 11 weeks into implementation, every doctor was considering leaving—and six physicians had left for good. To allow for conversion to the EHR, Contra Costa County administrators cut the physician patient loads in half. Lack of clinic appointments overburdened emergency rooms. Built to see 80 patients a day, the ERs were seeing more than 200 patients a day.

“This kind of disaster for patient care was predicted,” Brase continues. “The RAND Corporation said health IT has ‘the potential to improve the patient experience’ but also suggested it may be detrimental to patients.”

Besides highlighting physician burnout because of EHRs, paperwork and red tape, *“Big Brother in the Exam Room,”* published last month by Beaver’s Pond Press, also exposes how and why Congress forced doctors and hospitals to install a data-collecting, command-and-control surveillance system in the exam room. The extensively researched work also includes the negative impact of EHRs on privacy, personalized care, costs, patient safety and more, according to doctors and data from more than 125 studies. *“Big Brother in the Exam Room”* is available at [Amazon.com](#) and [www.BigBrotherInTheExamRoom.com](#).

For more information about CCHF, visit [www.cchffreedom.org](#), its [Facebook](#) page or its Twitter feed @CCHFFreedom. Read more about *“Big Brother in the Exam Room”* [here](#), and view the [media page for CCHF here](#). For more about CCHF’s free-market, cash-based care initiative, *The Wedge of Health Freedom*, visit [www.JointheWedge.com](#), *The Wedge* [Facebook](#) page or follow *The Wedge* on Twitter @wedgeoffreedom.

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To interview Twila Brase of *Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom* or for a review copy of *“Big Brother in the Exam Room,”* contact Deborah Hamilton, Media@HamiltonStrategies.com or 610.584.1096, ext. 102, or Patrick Benner, ext. 104.