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***STATEMENT***

Patient Rights Are Being Violated, and Congress is OK With It

HIPAA Allows Google to Profit from Private Health Information Without Patient Consent

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF) In response to news reports about Google receiving private patient data without patient consent from Ascension health care systems in 21 states, Twila Brase, president of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom and author of “Big Brother in the Exam Room: The Dangerous Truth about Electronic Health Records” makes the following statement:

“The nasty and virtually unknown reality about HIPAA is that it does not protect patient privacy. Instead, it eliminates the pre-HIPAA consent rights patients had regarding the use and sharing of their private medical records. It also facilitates the computerization of all their private medical data, making HIPAA-authorized outsider access and use even easier.

“HIPAA permits the sharing of patient data by those who hold it without the patient’s consent for a variety of activities, including the 65 activities listed in the very broad definition of “health care operations.” Therefore, HIPAA should really be viewed as a permissive data-sharing rule.

“In fact, HIPAA allows more than 702,000 covered entities, such as hospitals, health plans, clinics, laboratories and radiology facilities, plus 1.5 million “business associates,” and a variety of government agencies, to access and use patient medical records without patient consent (you can find the list here).

“The disturbing news about Ascension sharing data with Google—and earlier news reports about Google partnering with the Mayo Clinic—exemplifies the dangerous truth about HIPAA. The public, which has long been deceived about HIPAA, needs to hear and understand this truth.

“It is time for Congress to act. Congress must undo the damage that has been done by HIPAA. Congress must repeal the so-called HIPAA “privacy rule” and restore patient privacy and consent rights.”

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