For Immediate Release
December 03, 2019

CONTACT:
Richard Larkin McLay, Communications Manager, media@cchfreedom.org, 651.350.9713

CCHF Calls on U.S. Senate to Maintain Ban on Unique Patient Identifier

Nationwide Coalition of Organizations Urge Senate Appropriations Committee to Refuse National Patient-Tracking Number

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF) sent a coalition letter to U.S. Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Cosigned by more than 22 organizations nationwide, the letter urges the committee to refuse to fund the development of a Unique Patient Identifier (UPI) in the upcoming appropriations bill. CCHF writes:

“The U.S. House of Representatives has now voted to end the funding prohibition and advance a government number to identify and track every patient through the health care system. To reiterate, this unconstitutional federal number would be used not only to track patients, but to create a lifelong, fully linked, cradle-to-grave medical record, conduct research using patient data without consent (as permitted by the permissive HIPAA data-sharing rule, exemplified by the troubling Google-Ascension data-sharing agreements now making national headlines), and become the only way to access medical care in America. It would also mean the end of unbiased second opinions for patients.”

The letter follows CCHF’s strong opposition towards the U.S. House’s Labor-HHS appropriations bill in June 2019, which strikes the longstanding prohibition on the use of federal funds to create a UPI, also known as a National Patient ID. This prohibition (Section 510), initially put in place by former Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX), has been maintained in numerous appropriations bills since 1997.

In response to the House’s attempt to remove the ban on federal funding for a UPI, Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) introduced S. 2538 in September to repeal the UPI from federal law altogether.

“A UPI would be a mandated, government-issued federal ID number assigned to every American to identify and track patients, and to log their private medical information into one national medical-records system,” said Twila Brase, president and co-founder of CCHF.

“In an attempt to unify and control patient data, Congress threatens to put Americans and our national security at risk to hackers and others wishing to steal and leverage private medical and financial details. And
in a violation of patient rights, it undermines the integrity of the patient-doctor relationship and patient confidentiality in the exam room,” Brase added.

CCHF maintains a patient-centered, privacy-focused, free-market perspective. CCHF has worked in its home state of Minnesota and at the national level for more than 20 years to protect health care choices, individualized patient care, and medical and genetic privacy rights.

Twila Brase, RN, PHN was selected as one of 18 leaders to participate in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Quality Summit, co-chaired by Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan, which will provide President Trump with a roadmap for restructuring quality measurement programs by the end of 2019. She is the author of the four-time award-winning book, “Big Brother in the Exam Room: The Dangerous Truth About Electronic Health Records.”

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