



*****STATEMENT*****

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The CARES Act Creates Nationwide Health Surveillance System

Third Coronavirus Bill Greatly Expands Data Collection and Intrusion

ST. PAUL, Minn. — [Citizens' Council for Health Freedom \(CCHF\)](#) releases the following statement from its president, Twila Brase, RN, PHN:

“Congress just approved \$500 million for the creation of a nationwide health surveillance system. While it is not clear exactly how this will look, this system is not a last-minute decision based on the current emergency. This system has long been supported by the data-hungry health care industry, data corporations and state, local and federal government agencies. As the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) just announced on their [website](#):”

“The CARES Act includes \$500 million that solidifies congressional and Trump administration support for Data: Elemental to Health, a multi-year campaign to modernize the public health infrastructure in the United States. . . . HIMSS and our partners have been advocating for greater funding for more than [a] year. Working together, HIMSS along with the APHL, CSTE, NAPHSIS, NACCHO, and ASTHO have focused on bringing the public health infrastructure, surveillance system and workforce into the 21st Century.”

“For far too long, these industry groups and government organizations have been working together to create a nationwide system of health surveillance. Their combined efforts gave us the permissive HIPAA data-sharing rule in 2000 and the electronic health record mandate in 2009, forcing every doctor to digitize their patient’s data into centralized systems and not allowing patients to control how it’s used or shared.”

“With Google mining their medical records, and Congress approving surveillance, it’s time for Americans to insist that their medical privacy rights be restored. Health surveillance is unethical, unconstitutional and un-American. No American patient should face the choice between protecting their privacy and securing access to the care they need. And no doctor or nurse should be required to feed their patient’s private information into the government’s new surveillance system.”

“Emergency situations, which are temporary, make it easy to expand government powers long-term. They make it easy to enact controversial proposals that would not pass in ordinary times. But once implemented, these surveillance and analytic technologies won’t be easy to unplug. And clearly, that’s Congress’s intent.”

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. In 2016, CCHF launched The Wedge of Health Freedom, an online directory of direct-pay practices (JointheWedge.com)

Twila Brase, RN, PHN has been named by *Modern Healthcare* as one of the “100 Most Powerful People in Health Care.” She is the host of the daily *Health Freedom Minute* radio program heard by over 5 million weekly listeners on more than 800 radio stations nationwide, and 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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