

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
April 28, 2014

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Citizens' Council for Health Freedom Tells 'HIPAA Hurt Me' Stories to Unveil the Dangers of Coercive 'Privacy' Form

ST. PAUL, Minn.—If there's one myth about patient privacy that *Citizens' Council for Health Freedom* (*CCHF*, www.cchfreedom.org) wants to dispel, it's that HIPAA protects patients.

Exactly the opposite is true, says *CCHF*, a Minnesota-based national organization dedicated to preserving patient-centered health care and protecting patient and privacy rights.

Instead, HIPAA (or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) and its "Privacy Rule" isn't a privacy protection at all. Rather, the rule is permissive, and together with the 2009 HITECH Act, makes patient medical records accessible to more than 2.2 million entities. Furthermore, the blanket "HIPAA form" pushed across the counter at doctors' offices around the country is simply a vehicle to make patients think their data will be held in confidence. If individuals actually read the federally-required Notice of Privacy Practices, they will see they have no privacy under HIPAA.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on its website says patients do not have to sign the form, and *CCHF* is asking individuals to exercise that right.

"The so-called HIPAA privacy form is another glaring example not only of the government's deceitful tactics but also of the government's failure to let doctors, clinics and hospitals know about the patient's right to refuse to sign the form. The unfortunate fact is that patients have been hurt when they exercise that right," said CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase. "The biggest issue is that some patients are being denied access to care because they rightfully refused to sign the HIPAA form. And some try to refuse it, only to find that the HIPAA portion is part of a multiple-item consent form that has only one signature for all the separate consents. That's coercive consent."

To help inform policymakers, patients and others about the problems with HIPAA, *CCHF* is asking for stories from those who have been hurt when they refused to sign the HIPAA privacy form. Stories can be submitted online at www.HIPAAHurtMe.org, which takes visitors to a *CCHF* page educating them further about the problem of privacy and their right to refuse to sign the form.

For example, one patient told *CCHF* that he was denied an MRI unless he signed the HIPAA form, stating on the HIPAAHurtMe.org web site, "Hospital refused MRI because I would not sign HIPAA ... Hospital had all the releases on one page. I read the HIPAA material and told (*sic*) them that I could not sign their paper. They called a supervisor who assured me that my data would only go to my doctor even though the form did not say so."

At HIPAAHurtMe.org, *CCHF* encourages individuals not to sign the form, saying: ***"It's important to exercise this right, and we need as many stories about what happens when patients refuse to sign the***

form, particularly if you are denied care, made to feel bad, made to miss your appointment or hurt in any other way.”

“Contrary to popular belief,” CCHF continued, “patients are not required to sign HIPAA ‘privacy’ forms. The HIPAA form is only an acknowledgment that the clinic’s or hospital’s ‘Notice of Privacy Practices’ has been received. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, patients are not required to sign any form acknowledging that they received the notice.”

CCHF encourages citizens to become educated about HIPAA by:

- **Knowing** that signing the HIPAA form *does not* provide patients with any privacy or consent rights, but the signature could be *used against patients* if they ever declare that their privacy rights have been violated. Clinics and hospitals could use the signature to argue that patients knew their confidential information could be shared.
- **Refusing** to sign HIPAA acknowledgment forms.
- **Asking** state lawmakers to pass legislation that protects patients from HIPAA and protects private medical records from being accessed by the government and others without voluntary informed written consent.
- **Learning** more at bit.ly/HIPAAnotice.

Celebrating its 20th year, Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom is a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn. CCHF supports patient and doctor freedom, medical innovation and the right of citizens to a confidential patient-doctor relationship. CCHF also 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.

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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.