

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

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**City of St. Paul to Vote Tomorrow on Getting Access
to ‘Entire Medical Record’ of Certain Patients at
HealthPartners**

*Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom Says
Separate Informed Patient Consent Should be Required*

ST. PAUL, Minn.—One privacy-focused health policy organization says a proposed data agreement between the City of St. Paul and HealthPartners may violate patients’ rights to give or deny access to their medical records and will put patients’ private medical data at risk.

Twila Brase, president and co-founder of *Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom (CCHF, www.cchfreedom.org)*, a national organization dedicated to preserving patient-centered health care and protecting patient and privacy rights, says a proposed agreement between HealthPartners (HP), a Minnesota health plan, and the City of St. Paul will give the City access to the entire medical record of certain patients for the purpose of follow-up visits by paramedics.

The St. Paul City Council will vote on acceptance of the agreement at a 3:30 p.m. (CT) meeting tomorrow, Aug. 5. The agreement states that the purposes for the data-sharing agreement must fall “within the scope of HealthPartners standard patient consent form.”

“Is this particular project for sharing data with the City of St. Paul on the standard patient consent form? Will the patients be told that the City of St. Paul will get their ‘entire medical record’ under this agreement?” Brase asked, and then added, “I doubt it.”

Brase also added that the HealthPartners form found online called “Consent to Arrange for Payment and for Sharing of My Information” has only a single signature despite various items above that the patient may not want to consent to. It does not mention the “HealthPartners Paramedic Agreement” as stated in the City Council’s Meeting Agenda.

“We are seeing this problem of bundled consents more and more,” Brase said. “By asking patients to sign a single form with many items and no opt-outs during a vulnerable time—a time of a medical crisis—they are putting these individuals in the difficult position of signing away their privacy rights without even realizing it.”

Brase says there are many other concerning issues with the proposal and the form, including:

- Patients may verbally consent to the paramedic visits, but are not aware that HP will hand over all the data in their electronic health record to the City of St. Paul’s “Authorized Users” (clinical and administrative personnel), as stated in the proposed agreement.
- The agreement categorizes this data-sharing under “payment or healthcare operations.” However, Minnesota law is stronger than HIPAA and, thus, requires patients be asked for permission to share data for payment and “health care operations.” Having a patient consent for sharing data for treatment, billing and health care operations on the same consent form without an opt-out is not voluntary nor informed consent.

For more information about **CCHF** and its [“5C” Solution for Health Care](#), visit its web site at www.cchfreedom.org, its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cchfreedom or its Twitter feed, [@CCHFreedom](#).

Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom, a patient-centered national health freedom organization based in St. Paul, Minn., exists to protect health care choices and patient privacy. CCHF sponsors the daily, 60-second radio feature, Health Freedom Minute, which airs on approximately 350 stations nationwide, including 200 on the American Family Radio Network and 100 on the Bott Radio Network. Listeners can learn more about the agenda behind health care initiatives and steps they can take to protect their health care choices, rights and privacy.

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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 at 215-815-7716 or 610-584-1096, or Beth Harrison at 610-584-1096, Media@HamiltonStrategies.com.