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Watson and the Holocaust

Welcome to the Health Freedom Minute. This is Twila Brase, president of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom.

Last week I discussed how “Watson,” the IBM Computer that won Jeopardy, is moving into health care. The computer is named for Thomas Watson, founder of IBM.

In 2001, a book called *IBM and the Holocaust* described how Mr. Watson provided the tabulating equipment Hitler used to round up the Jews. His Hollerith punch-card machines are in the Holocaust Museum today.

The book describes IBM’s punch cards as “a card with standardized holes,” each representing a different trait of the individual. The card was fed into a ‘reader’ and sorted. Punch cards identified Jews by name. Each one served as “a nineteenth-century bar code for human beings.”

History is important. Cost containment is a priority. Let’s make sure Watson isn’t used to ration lives away.

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