

patientprivacyrights

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House Turns A Deaf Ear To Appeals for Patient Privacy in Health Information Technology Bill

Electronic Medical Records Become “Soft Targets”

Austin, Texas – Patient Privacy Rights, a national consumer privacy watchdog organization stated today that the U.S. House of Representatives has made Americans’ medical records a “soft target” for misuse and theft by not allowing privacy language in the legislation.

“Without basic privacy protections built into the legislation up front, Congress will create an electronic superhighway system for others to misuse, datamine, and steal the nation’s medical records,” Peel said.

Patient Privacy Rights and the Coalition for Patient Privacy has repeatedly urged Congress to include specific patient privacy protections in health information technology (HIT) legislation.

“We are puzzled why the House will not allow language that will guarantee patient privacy in the Health Information Technology Promotion Act of 2006, H.R. 4157,” said Deborah Peel, MD, Chairman of Patient Privacy Rights Foundation. “Maintaining the status quo equals zero patient privacy.”

Patient Privacy Rights has been urging Congress to add specific privacy language to upcoming HIT legislation because HIPAA regulations currently do not adequately protect electronic medical records and because current HIPAA enforcement has netted only two violators and resulted in no fines since the new regulations became effective in 2002.

In the several letters to the Congress, Patient Privacy Rights and the Coalition for Patient Privacy urged Congress to include the following provisions in HIT legislation:

- Expressly recognize the individual’s right to medical privacy
- Give patients control over who can see & use their electronic medical records
- Allow patients to opt-in, opt-out
- Give patients the right to segment sensitive information
- Provide protections including audit trails, breach notification, and meaningful penalties for privacy violations

About Patient Privacy Rights

Patient Privacy Rights is a national consumer watchdog organization based in Austin, TX. The mission of Patient Privacy Rights is to empower Americans to protect and preserve their human rights to medical privacy. Patient Privacy Rights believes Americans should have the right to decide who can see and use their medical records and is educating Americans about threats to patient privacy. They have launched an online petition for Americans to tell Congress “I Want My Medical Privacy”.

Web site: www.patientprivacyrights.org

Sign the “I Want My Medical Privacy” Petition: www.patientprivacyrights.org/petition

To view previous letters to Congress from the Coalition for Patient Privacy:
www.patientprivacyrights.org/privacycoalition

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