

THE COALITION FOR PATIENT PRIVACY

The Need for Privacy with Health IT

Personal privacy is a right Americans have long cherished. It is also a right we often take for granted until privacy is violated. *Imagine an ex-spouse finding your private health records with a Google search; your boss discovering you take an anti-depressant, or a bank or the government accessing your life's medical history for any purpose they deem necessary.* **In the next five years, every American will encounter the need to protect their privacy, a fundamental civil liberty, as the requirement for electronic medical records matures.**

The Coalition for Patient Privacy works to empower individuals and prevent widespread discrimination based on health information using a grassroots, community organizing approach.

Electronic medical records (EMRs) and increased access to personal health information may offer great benefits. *At the same time, open access to such sensitive information exponentially increases the opportunities for misuse, abuse and discrimination by employers, insurers, creditors, government and others.*

35% of all Fortune 500 companies admitted to looking at employees' medical records before making hiring and promotion decisions.

(65 Fed. Reg. 82,467)

Currently, 1 in 8 Americans takes evasive action to protect their privacy.

As a consequence, they put their health and lives at risk by withholding information, avoiding tests, using an alias, seeing multiple doctors or avoiding care altogether. Minorities have even higher levels of distrust of the health system.

In 2008, 7,033,064 identifiable electronic health records were breached.¹ The Coalition for Patient Privacy advocates for the highest standards for privacy and security to protect our most sensitive, revealing information. **We believe all Americans deserve and expect a trusted, private, quality health care system.**

What you say in the doctor's office, should stay in the doctor's office.

Jobs should be awarded based on ability, not prescription history, DNA or cost of insurance. The same criteria should apply to access to insurance, education, credit and many other important opportunities in life. *Join us in our efforts to protect patient privacy. Everyone has a stake in this issue!*

For more information:

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¹ Identity Theft Resource Center at http://www.idtheftcenter.org/artman2/publish/lib_survey/ITRC_2008_Breach_List.shtml