

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**EPIC AND PATIENT PRIVACY RIGHTS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN
To Protect Medical Records**

The Electronic Privacy Information Center and Patient Privacy Rights today announced a joint effort to establish stronger protections in the United States for patients' medical information. EPIC and Patient Privacy Rights have launched an online petition calling for strong medical privacy safeguards.

"2005 is the year that the American public learned that massive security breaches of personal information have made identity theft the number one crime in America. We must not allow the most sensitive personal records that exist, our medical records, to go online without adequate privacy safeguards," said EPIC Executive Director Marc Rotenberg.

Congress is rushing to pass legislation to establish a National Health Information Network without patient privacy protections. Yet a Harris poll this past February found that 69 percent of adults do not believe strong enough data security will be installed. An earlier Gallup survey found that 78 percent of the American public feel it is very important that their medical records be kept confidential.

"No one should be able to see or use your medical records without your permission," said Dr. Deborah Peel, founder and chairman of the Patient Privacy Rights Foundation. "Americans must have confidence in the privacy and security of their online medical records."

The petition states simply:

- I want to decide who can see and use my medical records
- I do not want my medical records or those of my family's to be seen or used by my employer
- I should never be forced to give up my right to privacy in order to get medical treatment

EPIC organized the first successful Internet petition in 1994 when 47,000 wrote to President Clinton to object to the Clipper chip.

"We urge our friends and colleagues across the country to support the excellent petition of Patients Privacy Rights. Now is the time for Americans to send the message that protecting medical privacy online is essential to modernizing the healthcare system," Mr. Rotenberg said.

About EPIC

EPIC is a public interest research center in Washington, D.C. It was established in 1994 to focus public attention on emerging civil liberties issues and to protect privacy, the First Amendment, and constitutional values. Web site: <http://www.epic.org/>

About Patient Privacy Rights

Patient Privacy Rights Foundation is a national consumer watchdog organization based in Austin, Texas. The mission of Patient Privacy Rights is to empower Americans to protect and preserve their human and constitutional rights to medical privacy. Patient Privacy Rights believes that individuals should have the right to decide who can see and use their medical information and is educating Americans about threats to patient privacy. Web site: <http://www.patientprivacyrights.org>

"I Want My Medical Privacy!" petition:
<http://www.patientprivacyrights.org/petition>

NOTE TO REPORTERS:

A teleconference to discuss the EPIC-Patient Privacy Rights medical privacy petition has been scheduled for Thursday, October 27 at 10 am EDT.

For call-in information, contact:

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