

July 23, 2018

Representative Peggy Scott, Chair  
Legislative Commission on Data Practices  
437 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Warren Limmer, Vice-Chair  
95 University Ave W.  
MN Senate Building, Room 3221  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Scott, Vice-Chair Limmer, and members of the Data Practices Commission:

We are writing today to provide our strong support to amend the Minnesota Health Records Act to allow for the clinically appropriate release of information as permitted under HIPAA, and to thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

The Minnesota Health Records Act was passed in the 1980's, and has only had limited modifications since its initial passage. By contrast, health care and technology has changed dramatically since that time. Thirty years ago, virtually no one had a personal computer, medical records were paper charts, and patients remained with a primary care provider for the majority of their lifetime. Today, people have computers in their pockets, providers have adopted electronic medical records, patients change their providers more frequently, and they interact with a full complement of health professionals within primary care, specialty care, and community services.

Minnesota's health care system is now built upon a standard that presumes a patient's information cannot be shared. A consent to release information must be signed at the right location, at the right time, and for bi-directional exchange (for example, from primary care doctor to oncologist and back to primary care doctor). Unfortunately, this complexity means that patients often find that their information has not reached its intended destination in time. This results in anxiety, added stress, duplicative tests, rescheduled visits, and unnecessary delays to treatment. At best, this burden becomes a nuisance, but at worst, it can be life-threatening.

Technology and information go hand in hand: together, they are the keys to quality, best practices, and efficiencies in care delivery. Minnesota's unique requirements under the MHRA ultimately prevent our state's providers from truly leveraging IT capabilities, because custom rules require customized- and expensive- technology solutions. In addition, increasing the utility of health IT enables providers to cross their silos of expertise to coordinate care, and connect patients to appropriate services across the care continuum.

We hold a sacrosanct responsibility to safeguard patients' health information; however we must not confuse confidentiality with secrecy. We are providers, patients, clients, payers, and constituents who know that Minnesota can do better. Updating the MHRA to allow for the release of clinically appropriate information like treatment, payment, and healthcare

operations strikes a careful balance between safeguarding patient privacy and executing patient-centered care. Again, thank you for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Allina Health  
ALS Association Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota Chapter  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Heart Association, Midwest Chapter  
Avera Health  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota  
Catholic Charities  
CentraCare Health, Amy Porwoll, CIO & V.P. Information Services  
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota  
ClearWay Minnesota  
Emergency Physicians Professional Association  
Fairview Health Services  
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare  
HealthEast Care System  
HealthPartners  
Hennepin County  
Hennepin County Public Health  
Hennepin County Medical Center  
Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement  
Lakeview Hospital  
Local Public Health Association  
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
Mayo Clinic  
Medica  
Medical Alley Association  
Methodist Hospital  
Metropolitan Health Plan  
Midwest Association for Medical Equipment Services  
Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians  
Minnesota Ambulance Association  
Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers  
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs  
Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health  
Minnesota Business Partnership  
Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance  
Care Providers of Minnesota, Toby Pearson, Vice President of Advocacy  
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, Bentley Graves  
Minnesota Chapter of the Academy of Emergency Physicians

Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities  
Minnesota Council of Health Plans  
Minnesota Hospital Association  
Minnesota Home Care Association  
LeadingAge MN, Kari Thurlow, Senior Vice President of Advocacy  
Minnesota Medical Association  
Minnesota Medical Group Management Association  
Minnesota Rural Health Association  
North Memorial Health Care  
Opportunity Partners  
Pediatric Home Service  
PreferredOne  
Regions Hospital  
Rural Health Care Association  
Sanford Health  
SEIU Healthcare  
Southern Prairie Community Care, William Muenchow, Executive Director  
Twin Cities Medical Society  
UCare  
University of Minnesota, Lori J. Ketola, Chief Health Information Compliance Officer, Academic Health  
Center & Office of Health Sciences  
University of Minnesota Physicians  
Veteran Resilience Project  
Volunteers of America, Minnesota & Wisconsin; Paula Hart, President & CEO  
Wilder Foundation