

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Byron Rushing

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to Clarify Privacy Protections for Electronic Medical Records.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Byron Rushing	9th Suffolk

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT TO CLARIFY PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 6D of chapter 40J of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking
2 clause (v) in the third paragraph of subsection (d) and inserting in place thereof the following
3 language:—

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5 (v) give patients the option of allowing only designated health care providers to disseminate their
6 individually identifiable health information to any statewide interoperable electronic health
7 records network or statewide health information exchange;

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10 SECTION 2. Section 6F of chapter 40J of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking the
11 first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:—

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13 Any plan for a statewide interoperable electronic health records network or statewide health
14 information exchange approved by the health information technology council and every grantee
15 and implementing organization that receives monies for the adoption of health information
16 technology from the E-Health Institute Fund and/or pursuant to this chapter shall:

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19 SECTION 3. Said section 6F of chapter 40J of the General Laws, as appearing in section 4 of
20 chapter 305 of the acts of 2008, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “accessed”, in line
21 396, the following words:—

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23 ; and (5) require every grantee and implementing organization funded in whole or in part by the
24 E-Health Institute Fund to conduct privacy and security audits of any and all interoperable
25 electronic health records networks, health information exchanges, and participating entities that
26 maintain electronic health records for potential and actual privacy and security breaches by July
27 1 of each year. Each grantee and implementing organization shall report the results of the annual
28 audit to the health information technology council by July 1. The council shall report within 30
29 days to the Attorney General any audit result that indicates a violation of the rules and
30 regulations adopted by the health information technology council or Department of Public Health
31 pursuant to this chapter

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34 SECTION 4. Section 6G of said chapter 40J of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting
35 after the first paragraph the following paragraphs:—

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37 For the purposes of this chapter, the health information technology council shall
38 promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the administration and enforcement of this
39 chapter, including but not limited to defining the following terms: “identifiable health
40 information”, “unauthorized access” and “unauthorized disclosure.”

41 Any aggrieved individual claiming that any interoperable electronic health records
42 network or health information exchange, its operators, contractors or agents, and participating
43 entities that maintain electronic health records, funded in whole or in part by the E-Health
44 Institute Fund failed to maintain the privacy and security protections required in Section 6F of
45 this chapter or permitted an unauthorized access or disclosure as defined by the Health
46 Information Technology Council pursuant to Section 6G of this chapter may bring a civil action
47 in Superior Court.

48 The Attorney General may bring a civil action in Superior Court to
49 enforce the privacy and data security obligations of health information network grantees, their
50 operators, agents, and contractors, subject to GL Chapter 40J.

51 A court shall find a violation and order relief if it determines that any of the following
52 circumstances has occurred:

53 (1) any interoperable electronic health records network or health information exchange, its
54 operators, contractors, or agents, and participating entities that maintain electronic health
55 records, funded in whole or in part by the E-Health Institute Fund, failed to maintain
56 safeguards for the confidentiality and security of protected health information in violation
57 of this chapter or any rule or regulation promulgated by the health information
58 technology council pursuant to this chapter; or

59 (2) any interoperable electronic health records network or health information exchange, its
60 operators, contractors, or agents, and participating entities that maintain electronic health
61 records, funded in whole or in part by the E-Health Institute Fund, disclosed without
62 authorization identifiable health information as defined by any rule or regulation

63 promulgated by the health information technology advisory council pursuant to this
64 chapter; or

65 (3) any interoperable electronic health records network or health information exchange, its
66 operators, contractors, or agents, and participating entities that maintain electronic health
67 records, funded in whole or in part by the E-Health Institute Fund, failed to provide
68 notice of an unauthorized access or disclosure as required by Section 6G of Chapter 40J.

69 The court may order any interoperable electronic health records network or health
70 information exchange, its operators, contractors or agents, or any participating entity or
71 individual, to comply with this chapter and may order any other appropriate civil or equitable
72 relief, including an injunction to prevent non-compliance. If the court determines that there has
73 been a violation of this chapter, the aggrieved person is entitled to recover damages for losses
74 sustained as a result of this violation.

75 The measure of damages shall be the greater of the aggrieved person's actual damages, or
76 liquidated damages of \$1,000 for each violation, except that the total amount imposed on the
77 offending party for all violations of an identical requirement or prohibition during a calendar
78 year may not exceed \$100,000. If the court determines that there has been a violation of this
79 chapter that results from willful or grossly negligent conduct, the aggrieved person may recover
80 punitive damages not to exceed \$10,000, exclusive of any other loss, for each violation, except
81 that the total amount imposed on the offending party for all violations of an identical requirement
82 or prohibition during a calendar year may not exceed \$500,000 from the offending party.

83 If the aggrieved person prevails, the court shall assess reasonable attorney's fees and all
84 other expenses reasonably incurred in the litigation against the non-prevailing parties.
85 Responsible parties are jointly and severally liable for any compensatory damages, attorney's
86 fees or other costs awarded. Any action under this section is barred unless the action is
87 commenced within three years after the cause of action accrues or was or should reasonably have
88 been discovered by the aggrieved person or the person's lawful representative.

89 No employee shall be terminated, discharged, or retaliated against because he does any of
90 the following based on a reasonable belief that an activity, policy or practice of the employer or
91 another entity with whom the employer has a relationship violates this chapter or any rule or
92 regulation promulgated pursuant to this chapter:

- 93 (1) objects to or refuses to participate in any such activity, policy or practice;
94 (2) discloses or threatens to disclose such activity, policy or practice to a supervisor,
95 manager, public official, public body, or other entity; or
96 (3) provides information to or testifies before any body conducting an investigation, hearing
97 or inquiry into any violation of this chapter, or rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to
98 this chapter.
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