



# OPINION: CONGRESS NEEDS TO SAFEGUARD HEALTHCARE INFORMATION - INSIDE SOURCES

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In an era marked by powerful adversaries and increasing cyber threats, elected representatives and professionals in the healthcare industry must work across party lines to address a critical issue that affects everyone: cybersecurity in healthcare.

We rely more than ever on advanced technology for our national defense and daily lives. From financial institutions to gas stations, from grocery stores to hospitals, our critical infrastructure hinges on high-tech servers and software. Unfortunately, hostile nations and bad actors deploy hackers to infiltrate these systems, compromising our national security and personal data.

One of the most vulnerable sectors to cyberattacks is our healthcare system. Disturbingly, frequent cyberattacks plague healthcare organizations, disrupting patient care and endangering lives. Just recently, a cyberattack targeting Prospect Medical Holdings wreaked havoc in several states, rendering emergency rooms inoperable and restricting access to digital medical records.

Shockingly, from 2009 to July 2023, U.S. medical organizations endured 5,478 data breaches, exposing 423 million medical records. In an era of frequent cyber threats, we must maintain tangible backups of digital medical records.

Pharmacies, which play a vital role in patient care, are not immune to cyberattacks. In May, PharMerica experienced a data breach affecting the private healthcare information of 2 million patients. These breaches disrupt pharmacy services and jeopardize personal healthcare data that could be used to extort or steal your identity. That's why it's imperative to keep as much of this information on paper as possible.

That's why it's concerning to hear that the Food and Drug Administration has proposed a rule to put printed patient medication information (PMI) online. When you pick up a prescription at the pharmacy, you are given this printed PMI to have instructions on how to take your medication safely on hand. Making PMI digital might not seem like a big deal, but it's perilous. More than 100,000 people die annually because of medication non-adherence; many more would suffer without access to printed PMI.

Not only would digital PMI disproportionately affect rural communities without reliable access to the internet and our seniors who have a hard time using technology — it would also be an unnecessary cybersecurity risk. If digital PMI becomes vulnerable to theft, alteration or

deletion by malicious actors, countless Americans could fall prey to identity theft and medication errors. To protect American patients, we must safeguard printed PMI.



Fortunately, all hope is not lost. The Patients' Right to Know Their Medication Act was introduced by a bipartisan group of lawmakers in Congress and it is just common sense. This bill would standardize PMI based on proven cognitive research done in North Carolina by a professor at Duke University, ensure that the content is FDA-approved and that PMI is printed and supplied by the drug manufacturer. Keeping this information printed will protect millions of Americans' healthcare data and their lives.

In these divisive times, there is bipartisan consensus that safeguarding our healthcare system and healthcare information is a priority. We hope that members of Congress from both parties tell the FDA to do the right thing.