Clintonites Close In On Our Medical Records

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While the American people were trying to kill the FDIC Know Your Customer plan to monitor our financial records, the Clintonites have been moving steadily and craftily to grab access to our health records. Just as local bankers were to have been coopted to spy on our bank accounts, the Administration is using two groups, home health providers and senior citizens, to spy on our medical records and forward all sorts of personal data to government databases.

The pretext for these overreaching regulations is to uncover "fraud and abuse." But the methodology is to monitor all law-abiding citizens under the supposition that any of us might be doing something criminal.

The new regulation to force 9,000 home health care agencies to collect and report sensitive information about all their patients was issued by the powerful federal agency called HCFA (Health Care Financing Administration). OASIS (Outcome and Assessment Information Set) is the cutesy name for this latest venture into Big Brotherism.

Under OASIS, home health providers must interrogate ALL their patients, not merely those whose bills are being paid by the government through Medicare or Medicaid, exempting only children under age 18 and pre- and post-natal mothers. The government is thus reaching out to grab the medical records of patients whose medical bills are paid by private sources, i.e., not paid by the government.

The 12-page fine-print form that home health care providers must fill out on each patient is extraordinarily detailed, offensively privacy-invading to the patient, and obviously exhausting and time-consuming for the employee conducting the interrogation. Curiously, this mandatory government form carries a copyright notice on every page, probably to prevent commentators like me from making copies and alerting the public to this new evidence of the Clintonites' efforts to collect information that is none of the government's business.

The questionnaire isn't just about medical history, treatment and medications. Questions must be answered on race, ethnicity, family, whether you own or rent your residence, whom you live with, your finances, and your psychological attitude and behavior, of course, all tied into your Social Security number.

There's much more. The questionnaire demands information on your mental state, your depression, your tobacco and alcohol use, your obesity, your bathing and eating practices, and your lack of motivation, unrealistic expectations, indecisiveness, suicide attempts, and life expectancy. The form asks if you make grammar mistakes, or use "excessive profanity" or "sexual references," and it has 53 boxes to be filled out on toilet and "elimination" performance.

The home health care interrogator is instructed how to win the patient's trust before asking these nosy questions. If the patient refuses to answer any questions, the home health care employee is told to insert his own "observations."

There is no provision for voluntary informed consent on the part of the patient, or that he be told that his responses will be logged onto government databases. Home health providers must obey HCFA directives under penalty of not getting paid for their Medicare patients.

These forms must be filled out every time a home health care provider enrolls a new patient, and then revised every 60 days. Data are sent electronically to computers at state agencies and then to HCFA's database.

It was the 1996 Kennedy- Kassebaum Act (which Bob Dole bragged about passing) that legislated the framework for a federal system of collecting and sharing medical records identified by a unique number for each patient. The OASIS regulation is another step to implement one of the original goals of Clinton's 1994 nationalized health plan: global budgeting, i.e. government management of all private, as well as public, health-care spending.

When grassroots Americans found out about the Know Your Customer Regulation, they flooded the FDIC with 300,000 negative comments over a three-month comment period. But the comment period for the OASIS regulation expired March 26, and major newspapers didn't report it until 15 days before the deadline.

The Clinton Administration's other campaign to gather medical records is a plan to recruit all senior

citizens to spy on their own physicians with the goal of accusing them of fraud. Attorney General Janet Reno has made a public-private partnership with AARP to offer senior citizens the chance to collect a reward of up to $1000 if they file a report that leads to a monetary "recovery" from their doctor.

If a senior suspects that his doctor has billed Medicare too much for a service rendered, the senior is supposed to call the toll-free "Fraud Hotline" and report the doctor as a possible thief and crook.

The harassment potential is enormous when 39 million seniors start trying to collect a bonus if the doctor's office enters the wrong payment code number on a Medicare form. It is probable that most seniors believe that everything they buy is overpriced because they grew up at a time when prices were so much lower.

What a malicious scheme to harass doctors and destroy any confidential relationship between doctors and patients!