

Statement from Consumer Action

Consumer Action represents real people. Our constituents aren't really glamorous, aren't necessarily up on the latest news out of Washington, DC, and aren't always the loudest voices in the room on any subject. Neither are we.

But the mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers whose lives are deeply impacted by the decisions made in this building are here *today* because protecting their privacy *matters*.

For us, the issue of protecting health information privacy is not an academic argument. It is about real people losing their jobs, getting their identities stolen, being victims of petty theft, and suffering anguish and embarrassment by the unknowing exposure of their private medical records. Examples include a truck driver in Atlanta losing his job after his insurance company told his employer that he had sought treatment for alcoholism, or a 30-year employee of the FBI being forced into early retirement when the FBI found his mental health prescription records while investigating the man's therapist for fraud.

These stories are occurring across the country, every day. At the same time, the titles of movies you rent from a video store cannot be revealed without a court order and yet there is no agreement on a national level keeping medical records confidential.

Please consider our plea to both enable the success of Health IT and honor a cornerstone value of the American public: the belief that we are adequately protected by our government.