

Men and Women For a Representative Democracy In America

May 23, 2008

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Room 317
Russell Senate Office Building
1700 S. H. St., NE
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Senator McConnell,

Men and Women for a Representative Democracy in America oppose the U.S. HHS Bill creation of a nationwide health surveillance system. Such a system is costly, violates patient rights, and has tremendous potential for abuse.

There is also potential for that it uses broad, open-ended language to define the role of its vast new webpages of CD/DNA/RN systems, cancer screens and genomic markers. "The U.S. HHS Bill includes putting aside \$100 million. Nowhere in the Bill are measures for abuse mandatory measures that funding is contingent on, mentioned. The money in the Bill is supposed to be used primarily for testing, contact tracing and quarantine. "Witnessed to Health, a multi-year campaign to modernize the public health infrastructure in the United States. . . " Allowing funds for such a system at this time is irresponsible. The national debt is rapidly climbing, the economy is sagging due to the current crisis, and families are struggling financially. Any additional debt incurred should be to help United States citizens – not create a surveillance system to monitor them and inhibit their privacy.

Some are saying that a surveillance system is needed to manage health issues such as the pandemic. The first generated by the pandemic is the anxiety which brought congressional leaders together to approve nationwide health surveillance. Advocacy for this system by the health care industry, drug corporations, and government agencies began over a year ago. After the pandemic abates, an investment of \$100 million will certainly remain operational. What will its function be then? Will a panel determine which people warrant time and money spent on their health care?

A health surveillance system gives a share to the privacy and freedom of every citizen of the United States. The government has already found dozens to violate patient confidentiality by creating electronic health records that digitize every patient's data. These records contain health issues, gender identity, and religious preferences along with other personal information. It is reported that Google is already mining these medical records. Patients' private information is already being introduced due to human error, computer issues, and programming errors.

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