CDT Calls for Strong Privacy Provisions to be Included in Economic Stimulus Package

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Washington-The Center for Democracy & Technology today, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, urged Congress to include strong privacy protections with the proposed $20 billion for health information technology that is part of President Obama's economic stimulus package.

"The public wants electronic access to their personal health information - both for themselves and for their health care providers - but they also want privacy and now is the time to move forward with both the technology and the privacy protections," said Deven McGraw, director of the Health Privacy Project at CDT in her testimony before the Judiciary Committee.

Survey data shows that Americans have significant concerns about the privacy of putting their medical records online. "People will not use a health records system if they think it will further erode their privacy. That makes privacy an enabler, not an obstacle, to health care reform," McGraw said. "Privacy protections must be part of any legislation that promotes electronic health records."

McGraw applauded privacy provisions in the stimulus bill moving through the House, saying they are a step in the right direction toward creating a comprehensive framework of privacy and security protections for electronic health information. McGraw's urged the Senate to go a step further, by adding additional enforcement and accountability provisions.

Deven McGraw's testimony can be found online here:
http://www.cdt.org/testimony/20090127_mcgraw.pdf [1]

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