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Paul Introduces Legislation to Fight Invasion of Medical Privacy *Proposed Regulations will Devastate Doctor-Patient Relationship*

Washington, DC. Congressman Ron Paul yesterday introduced emergency legislation designed to prevent the federal government from implementing dangerous new medical regulations. The regulations, which go into effect April 14th unless blocked by Congress, will do irreparable harm to every American's medical privacy. Paul's "Medical Privacy Protection Resolution" (HJR 38) provides Congress with another chance to review and reject the invasive new rules before they become law. Paul, a physician for more than 30 years who still practices medicine, knows the critical importance of doctor-patient confidentiality. "Once again we are threatened with government regulations that invade our privacy," he stated. "The last administration wanted to create national medical ID numbers to track your private medical history throughout your life. Now federal health bureaucrats want to access your medical records without your consent, and they want to make it easier for big insurance carriers, pharmaceutical companies, and HMOs to do the same. If they succeed in forcing doctors to turn over private medical information, the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship will be destroyed." Specifically, the pending regulations authorize the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to implement wide new medical rules. The new rules require doctors and other health providers to disclose private records to the federal government for very broadly defined purposes and without patient consent. Federal and state law enforcement officials are granted access to patient records without a search warrant, despite Fourth and Fifth amendment prohibitions against unreasonable searches and compelled testimony. Patients will have only limited knowledge of who sees their records, and individuals will not be able to sue health care providers or the government for breaches of privacy. "These regulations will harm millions of Americans," Paul continued. "Patients will be afraid to disclose sensitive information to their doctors because it will end up in a federal database. Patients will be forced to conceal a wide range of sensitive medical problems, such as AIDS, impotence, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol addictions, and psychiatric problems. Doctors need the full truth to provide effective treatment. The HHS rules turn doctors into government agents, who are required to turn over information which ultimately could be used against their patients by federal agencies, law enforcement, and health insurers." Lobbyists and government officials undoubtedly will be working overtime to defeat Paul's legislation, but opposition to the HHS regulations is growing among the American people. Some in Congress, including House Majority leader Richard Armey, also have expressed opposition to the HHS rules. All Americans reading this press statement are strongly encouraged to contact their Representatives in Congress and urge them to vote for HJR 38, the "Medical Privacy Protection Resolution."

