

(To my GP)

## Exercising my right to opt out

Dear Doctor,

As you are probably aware, the Government is intending to ask you to transfer the electronic medical records of your patients on to a national database. They intend you to do this without first seeking the consent of your patients. It is BMA policy that patients should give their individual consent prior to their information being transferred on to the national database.

I would be grateful if you would ensure that none of my records held by you are entered onto the national system. Would you please also file or scan a copy of this letter in my records and also record my dissent by entering the Read code **'93C3 – Refused consent for upload to national shared electronic record'** into my computer record. I am aware of the implications of this request and will notify you should I change my mind.

Further information for General Practitioners is available at [www.TheBigOptOut.org](http://www.TheBigOptOut.org)

Yours sincerely,

(don't forget: name, address, date of birth)

## Opting out of the NHS databases

After the ID database, the Government proposes to collect all the nation's medical records into central NHS databases. Children will be next; almost all public-sector data on our children will be linked up – including the NHS data, school records and social work files.

You can still do something. Ministers have said that patients will be able to opt out of having their GP records uploaded to central systems. They hope that very few people will do so; one senior civil servant has said that opt-outs should not be allowed at all. The BMA is unhappy; it says that data should only be shared with patient consent. So your doctor should be expecting letters like this! If enough people opt out, the central scheme may be changed or abandoned – this happened in Iceland after 11% of the population opted out of a database scheme there which the government wanted but which doctors opposed.

Last week, a Medix poll showed that 52% of GPs did not plan to upload their patients' data without consent. A Joseph Rowntree poll question released today shows that 53% of patients oppose 'Requiring everyone's medical records to be stored in a centralised database for access by civil servants and government officials, with no right to opt out'.

Please consider protecting your privacy – and everyone else's – by completing the letter overleaf and sending it to your GP. Even if your own medical records don't contain anything sensitive, think of others who are not so lucky. If the only people who opt out are those with some stigmatised condition, then opting out could put them at risk. Any of us might be in their shoes some day.

For more information, check out [www.TheBigOptOut.org](http://www.TheBigOptOut.org).

The Big Opt Out, 29th November 2006