

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to public records; exempting
3 from public records requirements information
4 and records reported to the Department of
5 Health under the electronic monitoring system
6 for prescription of controlled substances
7 listed in Schedules II-IV; authorizing certain
8 persons and entities access to
9 patient-identifying information; providing
10 guidelines for the use of such information and
11 penalties for violations; providing for future
12 legislative review and repeal; providing a
13 finding of public necessity; providing a
14 contingent effective date.

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16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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18 Section 1. (1)(a) A patient's personal identifying
19 information contained in any record reported under section
20 893.055, Florida Statutes, is confidential and exempt from the
21 provisions of section 119.07(1), Florida Statutes, and Section
22 24(a), Article I of the State Constitution.

23 (b) This section is subject to the Open Government
24 Sunset Review Act of 1995 in accordance with section 119.15,
25 Florida Statutes, and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2008,
26 unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by
27 the Legislature.

28 (2) The Department of Health may disclose a patient's
29 or practitioner's identity in the information or records
30 reported under section 893.055, Florida Statutes, whose
31 identity is otherwise confidential and exempt from the

1 provisions of section 119.07(1), Florida Statutes, and Section
2 24(a), Article I of the State Constitution, to the following:

3 (a) A practitioner defined under chapter 893, Florida
4 Statutes, who requests information and certifies that the
5 information is necessary to provide medical treatment in
6 accordance with section 893.05, Florida Statutes, to a current
7 patient, subject to the patient's written consent. The
8 practitioner may designate one person in his or her office to
9 access the information and records reported under section
10 893.055, Florida Statutes, on the practitioner's patients and
11 provide information to the practitioner as directed, subject
12 to the patient's written consent.

13 (b) A pharmacist licensed in this state, or a pharmacy
14 intern or pharmacy technician designated by the pharmacist,
15 who requests information and certifies that the requested
16 information is to be used to dispense controlled substances in
17 accordance with section 893.04, Florida Statutes, to a current
18 patient.

19 (c) A criminal justice agency defined under section
20 119.011, Florida Statutes, which enforces the laws of this
21 state or the United States relating to drugs and which is
22 engaged in a specific investigation involving a violation of
23 law. Any member of a criminal justice agency receiving the
24 information as authorized in this section shall avoid
25 unauthorized use or dissemination thereof. Such member
26 receiving the information may disclose its contents to other
27 persons to the extent that such disclosure is appropriate to
28 the proper performance of the official duties of the member
29 making or the person receiving the disclosure.

30 (d) An employee or agent of the Department of Health
31 who is involved in a specific investigation involving a

1 violation of the chapter regulating the alleged violator, the
2 rules of the Department of Health, or the rules of a board
3 regulating the alleged violator.

4 (e) An employee of the Agency for Health Care
5 Administration who is involved in an investigation related to
6 the agency's responsibility to control fraud and abuse in the
7 Medicaid program.

8 (3)(a) A person who obtains information under this
9 section may not use the information to his or her own personal
10 advantage or reveal any information obtained in the
11 enforcement of law except in a prosecution or administrative
12 hearing for a violation of state or federal law or, if
13 applicable, to provide medical treatment in accordance with
14 section 893.05, Florida Statutes, to a current patient or to
15 dispense controlled substances in accordance with section
16 893.04, Florida Statutes, to a current patient, or to the
17 patient for verifying the accuracy of such information.

18 (b) Any person who knowingly violates this subsection
19 commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided
20 in section 775.082 or section 775.083, Florida Statutes.

21 (4) A practitioner or pharmacist authorized to obtain
22 information under this section is not liable for accessing or
23 failing to access such information.

24 (5) A practitioner, pharmacist, or other person or
25 agency that obtains information reported under section
26 893.055, Florida Statutes, must maintain the confidentiality
27 of such information pursuant to sections 456.057 and 465.017,
28 Florida Statutes, or as otherwise required by law.

29 Section 2. The Legislature finds that it is a public
30 necessity that personal-identifying information reported to
31 the Department of Health under section 893.055, Florida

1 Statutes, be held confidential and exempt from disclosure
2 because doing so will facilitate efforts to maintain
3 compliance with the state's drug laws not only by patients
4 through accurate and timely reporting by health care
5 practitioners and pharmacists of potential drug diversion
6 without compromising a patient's privacy, with certain
7 exceptions, but also by persons authorized to prescribe or
8 dispense controlled substances through oversight review and
9 investigation of improper prescribing and dispensing
10 practices. The exemption for a patient's identity in the
11 information or records reported under section 893.055, Florida
12 Statutes, facilitates the sharing of information between
13 health care practitioners and pharmacists so that the
14 practitioners and pharmacists may appropriately identify and
15 evaluate a patient's risk for drug diversion and the resulting
16 abuse of controlled substances without compromising a
17 patient's privacy. The Legislature further finds that the
18 exemption for records identifying a patient or practitioner
19 within information or records reported to the Department of
20 Health is a public necessity to protect health-related
21 information of a sensitive and personal nature. Matters of
22 personal health are traditionally private and confidential
23 concerns between a patient and a health care provider. The
24 private and confidential nature of personal health matters
25 pervades both the public and private health care sectors. For
26 these reasons, an individual's expectation of a right to
27 privacy in all matters regarding his or her personal health
28 necessitates such exemption. Information relating to
29 practitioners prescribing or dispensing controlled substances
30 needs to be kept confidential for criminal justice agencies
31 and regulatory agencies and departments to properly

1 investigate potentially improper prescribing or dispensing
2 practices that indicate drug diversion by such practitioners
3 or contributing to drug diversion by a patient without
4 compromising the livelihood of such practitioner with
5 unsubstantiated charges of improper dispensing or prescribing
6 practice. For these reasons, a practitioner's expectation of a
7 right to privacy in the review and investigation of
8 unsubstantiated charges affecting his or her livelihood
9 necessitates such exemption.

10 Section 3. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2004,
11 if Senate Bill 2390 or similar legislation establishing an
12 electronic system to monitor the prescribing of controlled
13 substances is adopted in the same legislative session or an
14 extension thereof and becomes law.