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The Senate HELP Committee should remove the statutory limitations on sharing drug and alcohol abuse treatment information as part of lawmakers' work on electronic medical records, a group of behavioral health providers [wrote](#) to the committee today.

Their letter calls out problems in a section of federal law, known as 42 CFR Part 2, that prohibits the sharing of substance-abuse records beyond providers expressly authorized to view them.

“Transposed to the digital era, this same statute now impedes the integration of behavioral health into the larger health care system and threatens the benefits that EHRs can bring to improving care coordination for a patient/consumer population whose overall health status is now at crisis proportions,” reads the letter from the Behavioral Health IT Coalition and Netsmart, an EHR vendor specializing in behavioral health products.

Congress has had a difficult time removing 42 CFR Part 2. An effort to ease the flow of substance-abuse records never made it into the interoperability section of the 21st Century Cures Act before the House passed it last week. The Behavioral Health IT Coalition is asking the Senate to revive that effort.

The coalition also renewed their long-standing call to allow mental health providers to receive meaningful use incentives.

— *David Pittman*