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February 6, 2000

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Attn: Privacy-P, Room G-322A
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Blvd.
Washington, D.C. 20201

229776

Dear Sir,

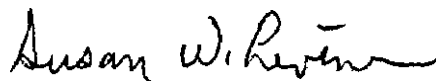
This letter is a comment on the "Treatment, payment and health care operations" **section of the Standards of Privacy of Individual Identifiable Health Information, RIN0991-AB08.**

I urge the government to state in the regulations that individuals have a right to privacy for all identifiable medical information. Recognition of privacy for all psychotherapy communication is vital and must be **preserved** in this **final** draft regulation. This privilege, as established by the Supreme Court, should be expressly recognized and not waived for any disclosure required for treatment or payment of insurance.

Patient consent should be required for the disclosure of all mental health information. I urge the government to adopt the "New **Jersey**" model for protecting mental health information.

I am a member of the Clinical Social Work Federation, a national organization dedicated to clinical treatment of patients with mental health issues I urge to consider these important points in your deliberations.

Thank you,



Susan W. Levine

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Individual • Couple • Family
Consultation • Treatment