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NEWS BRIEF | 05.12.10

Two hospitals in Kentucky disclose breaches of protected health information (PHI)

Our Lady of Peace Hospital and The Medical Center in Bowling Green recently experienced breaches of protected health information affecting thousands of people.

According to the breach notification rule under the HITECH Act, breaches that affect five-hundred or more individuals must be disclosed within sixty days. Smaller breaches must be released annually.

Both hospitals are taking steps to prevent this situation from reoccurring. Steps include archival of data to a secure network, encryption of all data, employee reeducation and discipline.

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Cardiothoracic surgeon sent to prison for violation of the HIPAA Privacy

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Rule

After being released from his job as a researcher at the UCLA School of Medicine in 2003, Huping Zhou illegally accessed and read patient medical records of his co-workers, superiors and celebrities 323 times over the course of a month. Zhou was able to illegally view these records due to the fact that his access codes were not promptly terminated at UCLA.

He has been sentenced to four months in a federal prison for his crimes. Since the incident, the UCLA health system has expanded auditing capabilities, improved clinical information systems and created a HIPAA training and certification model that all physicians, staff and students must complete.

[Read the full article >>](#)

[Visit the HHS website for more information on HIPAA >>](#)

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HHS provides health care payers and providers with guidance on required security risk assessments of PHI

HIPAA security guidelines state that providers and payers must perform a risk assessment of their protected health information (PHI) to use as a basis for determining how secure their data is and what types of technology will be needed to ensure the safety of the information. Until

recently, it was unclear to healthcare professionals how to meet this requirement.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), a branch of the Health and Human Services Department (HHS), has drafted a set of guidelines to help healthcare payers and providers understand what is expected of them during security risk analysis. The risk analysis process involves identification of data collections, documentation of threats to the secure access and disclosure of protected health information, among other things.

[View the full article >>](#)

[View the OCR draft guidance on risk analysis >>](#)

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