**Michigan Medicine, University of Michigan Data Breach**

Michigan Medicine is the wholly owned academic medical center of the University of Michigan, an education institution based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In addition to its 1000 plus employees, the medical school is among the very best in the U.S in educating students and physicians, conducting research, and providing patient care and service to the Michigan state people and beyond (“About Michigan Medical School | University of Michigan Medical ...”, 2019).

Michigan Medicine was a victim of a data breach (Portable Device (PORT) breach) when a Michigan Medicine employee’s personal computer was stolen on June 3, 2018. The employee’s car was broken into, and his bag, which contained the laptop, was stolen. The theft was immediately reported to the local police, and Michigan Medicine was notified on June 4. Even though the information on the employee’s laptop did not include any personally identifiable information (PII), the data stored on the laptop may have exposed approximately 870 patients’ health information.

According to Michigan Medicine, the data that was stored on the laptop was health information of individuals that were collected for research purposes which the employee downloaded and stored on his personal laptop. The data stored on the laptop varied based on the research studies, but could have included patient names, birthdates, medical record number, gender, race, diagnosis and other treatment-related information. The institutional review board approved the collection of data at Michigan Medicine. The board reviews and approves proposed research studies involving human subjects to assure compliance with rigorous federal research regulatory requirements, including patient confidentiality and other human subject protections. However, the employee had the data on his device in violation of the review board’s approval and the Michigan Medicine policies (“Michigan Medicine notifies patients of health information data breach”, 2018).

From what is known today, Michigan Medicine has notified the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, and patients affected by the breach. The patients were also advised to monitor their medical insurance statements for any fraudulent transactions at the expense of their information. Additionally, Michigan Medicine continues to educate its employees on following patient privacy policies and prohibited use of personal unencrypted devices to store research data (“Michigan Medicine notifies patients of health information data breach”, 2018).

Unfortunately, just recently, Michigan Medicine was a victim of another data breach that exposed personal information of more than 5000 patients. A fake login link was sent to patients that appeared to be from Michigan Medicine's website that exposed names, addresses, SSN, diagnosis, and health insurance information. The institution issued an alert on August 17, 2019 after the breach occurred. From what is known today, Michigan Medicine sent out letters to affected individuals and deactivated various accounts (Dado, 2019).

References

About Michigan Medical School | University of Michigan Medical. (2019). Retrieved from https://medicine.umich.edu/medschool/about

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