

Notification of Potential Privacy Issue

On May 23, 2016, Neurology Physicians discovered that certain office visit notes dictated by our physicians and transcribed by our transcription company might have been made publicly available on the Internet when they were stored in an unsecured online folder used by the web hosting company of the transcription vendor. While we have no evidence that any these office notes were used or acquired by unauthorized third parties, in an abundance of caution we want affected patients to be aware of this potential issue.

The unsecured files consist of information dictated by physicians during patient office visits that occurred between March 12, 2010, and May 19, 2016. Depending on the type of office visit, these office notes may include: patient names, dates of birth, symptoms, diagnoses, treatments, and medical history (if it was a new patient visit and not just a follow-up appointment). We have verified that no Social Security numbers, drivers' license numbers, insurance plan details, or credit card payment information were included in these files.

Patients who were seen by the following physicians during the specified time periods may have been affected:

- Dr. Merrill Ansher: patients with appointments between March 12, 2010, and July 22, 2010.
- Dr. Catherine Hagerty: patients with appointments between March 12, 2010, and July 29, 2011.
- Dr. Yingjun David Li: patients with appointments between July 19, 2010, and July 3, 2014.
- Dr. Johannes Reim: patients with appointments between March 12, 2010, and May 19, 2016.

We have been unable to determine whether any office notes from 2010 – 2012 were ever actually publicly searchable online. None of the recent audits found any records from that period online and it is not possible to determine whether they were ever publicly searchable. We have confirmed that the 2010-2012 records were only in the online folder for a very short period of time and that they were routinely deleted from the unsecured folder by the transcription company once Neurology Physicians had downloaded them. However, office notes from 2013 to 2016 were apparently not routinely deleted from the folder once they were downloaded and may have been available and publicly searchable online during this period.

As soon as we became aware of this breach, we immediately terminated our contract with the transcription company, demanded that the transcription company remove all of our patient files from its servers, and initiated an investigation in coordination with our attorneys, IT consultants, and specialized HIPAA consultants. At this time an audit of all patient files has been concluded and any patient information that was found to be available online has been completely removed in order to mitigate any potential harm to our patients. We are also improving our HIPAA policies, procedures, and security standards and training all of our staff in order to prevent any future breaches of patient information. We will ensure that any new transcription company is fully HIPAA compliant and properly secures patient information in accordance with all applicable laws.

At this time we do not have any indication that these files have been used or acquired by unauthorized individuals; however, we know how important our patients' personal information is and advise that our patients immediately take the following steps in order to protect themselves from potential harm resulting from this breach:

- Call the toll-free numbers of any one of the three major credit bureaus (listed below) to place a fraud alert on your credit report. This can help prevent an identity thief from opening additional accounts in your name. Once the credit bureau confirms your fraud alert, the other two credit

bureaus will be automatically notified to place alerts on your credit report.

- **Equifax:** 1 (888) 766-0008; www.equifax.com; P.O. Box 740256, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241.
 - **Experian:** 1 (888) 397-3742; www.Experian.com; P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013.
 - **TransUnion:** 1 (877) 322-7289; www.transunion.com; Fraud Victim Assistance Division; P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790.
- Order your credit reports. After establishing a fraud alert, you will receive a follow-up letter that will explain how you can receive a free copy of your credit report. When you receive your credit report, examine it closely, and look for signs of fraud, such as credit accounts that are not yours.
 - Continue to monitor your credit reports. Even though a fraud alert has been established, you should continue to monitor your credit reports to ensure an imposter has not opened an account with your personal information.

We take very seriously our role of safeguarding our patients' personal information. We sincerely apologize and regret that this situation has occurred along with any stress or worry this may have caused our patients. We at Neurology Physicians are committed to rectifying this situation as efficiently as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about whether your information may have been affected, please do not hesitate to contact us at 1-855-613-8400.