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Nationwide Survey Reveals Privacy Concerns Impact Healthcare Decisions Among US Patients and Outcomes of Patient Care

Report details opportunities for care providers to change the course of care through the integration of privacy initiatives, the adoption of a privacy-based culture and effective communication with patients about privacy.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.– September 13th, 2011 – FairWarning, Inc., the inventor and world's leading supplier of solutions which monitor and protect patient privacy in Electronic Health Records, today released the first survey of U.S. patients that reveals how patient privacy considerations impact the delivery of healthcare.

FairWarning® commissioned an independent firm to execute a nationwide survey to examine how privacy concerns impact patients' healthcare decisions and more specifically measure to what degree:

- Privacy considerations influence who patients seek care from
- Privacy considerations influence when they receive care
- Privacy considerations influence where they seek care.
- Privacy considerations influence what information they disclose, thereby affecting the care they receive

Survey results reveal that the impact of patient privacy is far greater than just a legal and ethical responsibility to protect patients. In fact, concerns over patient privacy affect the flow of information to providers to use in the diagnosis and care of their patients:

- 85.2 percent of participants indicated that if they had a sensitive medical condition, a care provider's reputation for protecting privacy would influence their choice to seek care from that provider.
- 27.1 percent of patients stated they would withhold information from their care provider based on privacy concerns.
- 27.6 percent stated they have or would postpone seeking care for a sensitive medical condition due to privacy concerns.
- More than 1 out of 2 patients indicated they would seek care outside of their community due to privacy concerns with 35 percent indicating they would travel more than 50 miles.

Accurate information is the bedrock upon which physicians assess medical conditions, and hence determines the treatment patients receive. When this information is withheld or even falsified, fundamental treatment assumptions are impacted.

When a privacy breach occurs, patients have a significant negative response that results in patient attrition and damage to the provider's reputation. However, care providers have an opportunity to greatly reduce the reputational and financial impact of a breach through open communication with patients and effective resolution. In fact, patients are **three times more likely to stop seeking care** from a provider if they learned of a breach through the media rather than directly from the provider.

Among those patients who had experienced a breach, 60 percent indicated they no longer seek care from that provider. Further academic and industry study is needed to more completely understand the emotional, financial, family and career impact to the lives of patients who have suffered loss of privacy.

Survey respondents were also very clear about their expectations with regards to patient privacy protections. 61 percent of patients indicated that they would be more likely to seek care from a provider that invested in technologies and processes to detect and prevent privacy breaches, while nearly 2 out of 3 patients expect their care provider to proactively detect unauthorized access to their private record and respond quickly to the patient's inquiry as to who has accessed their record.

The survey as a whole reveals that care providers have an opportunity to change the course of patient care by utilizing best practices for protecting patient privacy and initiating a dialog with patients regarding how they proactively protect patient privacy.

"Patient treatment in modern healthcare is entirely information-based. Any friction in the free flow of information between care providers and patients, such as that caused by privacy concerns, prevents the patient from receiving the best possible care. This survey reveals that there is more work to be done to enable the free flow of pertinent medical information, and thus the best patient care outcomes," says Kurt Long, Founder and CEO of FairWarning®.

For a full copy of the survey results and methodology, please visit <http://www.fairwarningaudit.com/documents/2011-WHITEPAPER-US-PATIENT-SURVEY.pdf>.

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About FairWarning, Inc.

FairWarning® is the world's leading supplier of cross-platform healthcare privacy auditing solutions for Electronic Health Records. FairWarning® proactively protects healthcare organizations from emerging legal and privacy threats which include medical identity theft, identity theft, and other forms of healthcare information crimes. FairWarning® is industry's leading best practice solution for automating privacy auditing. The company is located in St. Petersburg, FL, to learn more, visit <http://www.FairWarningAudit.com> or call U.S. 727 576 6700.