



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

FairWarning, Inc.

Alison W. Matherly

727 576 6700 x137

Alison@FairWarning.com

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

Report details opportunities for care providers to change the course of care through Privacy by Design principles and transparent communication with patients about privacy.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, USA - January 26, 2012 – FairWarning, Inc., the inventor and world's leading supplier of cross-platform healthcare privacy auditing solutions for Electronic Health Records, today released the first nation-wide Canadian Patient Privacy Survey 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 from whom, when, where patients seek care, and what information they disclose, thereby affecting the care they receive. This survey is the latest in a series of national findings that includes the US, UK and France.

The Canadian Patient Privacy 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, as evidenced by some statistics found in the survey:

- 43.2% of Canadian patients stated they have withheld or would withhold information from their care provider based on privacy concerns
- 31.3% stated they have or would postpone seeking care for a sensitive medical condition due to privacy concerns
- More than 2 out of 5 Canadian patients, 42.9% indicated they would seek care outside of their community due to privacy concerns, with 33.7% indicating they would travel substantial distances, 50 kilometers or more, to avoid being treated at a hospital they did not trust, in order to keep sensitive information confidential, and
- 61.9% of Canadian patients reported that if there were serious or repeated breaches of patients' personal information at a hospital where they received treatment, it would reduce their confidence in the quality of healthcare offered by the hospital.

By withholding medical information, Canadian patients are impacting the care received and hence the outcome. 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.

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.

[Dr. Ann Cavoukian](#), Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, and developer of [Privacy by Design](#), states "The survey conducted by FairWarning confirms that Canadians take privacy

into consideration when making decisions about their own health care - they believe there should be serious consequences for those who are responsible for privacy breaches. As the Commissioner overseeing privacy laws in Ontario, I urge the adoption of tools to minimize known privacy and security risks, such as unauthorized access to electronic health records,” said Dr. Cavoukian. “These tools include privacy breach detection systems such as the comprehensive monitoring solutions offered by FairWarning.”

Survey respondents were also very clear about their expectations with regards to patient privacy protections. Canadian patients expect healthcare providers and hospital executives to aggressively protect patient privacy. Patients have a significant negative response when privacy violations occur and expect healthcare executives to be held accountable for breaches.

- 98.0% of Canadian patients think that chief executives and top managers of healthcare providers have a legal and ethical responsibility to protect patients’ medical records and private information from being breached
- 83.5% of patients agreed that patient data security should be regularly discussed at board meetings
- 90.6% agreed that where there are significant risks of privacy breaches, the chief executives and top management should take appropriate action to minimize or eliminate the risks
- 77.1% of Canadian respondents stated that chief executives and top managers need to do more to stop unauthorized access to medical records
- 89.5% stated that healthcare providers should currently monitor who looks at medical records and detect unauthorized access to personal information

“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®](#).

“We have known for some time that the public in general adopts privacy protective behaviors when sharing their information with health care providers,” said [Dr. Khaled El Emam](#), Canada Research Chair in Electronic Health Information at the University of Ottawa and the CHEO Research Institute. “But the numbers from this patient survey are startling, and suggest an urgent need for data custodians to adopt technologies and processes to collect, use, and disclose health information in a privacy preserving manner, and to monitor these. Equally important is to be transparent and proactively inform the public how their health information is handled.”

Dr. El Emam will be featured as a Guest Speaker on a FairWarning® Executive Series webinar entitled “**Peeping, Privacy & Patients: The Role of Privacy in Canadian Patient Treatment and its Benefits for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Information Users**” on February 22, 2012 at 2:00PM EST. To register, [click here](#) or visit <http://www.fairwarning.com/subpages/Canada.asp>.

For a full copy of the survey results and methodology, visit <http://www.fairwarning.com/documents/Canada/2011-CanadaSurvey.pdf>

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, USA. To learn more, please visit <http://www.FairWarning.com> or call US 727 576 6700.

###