

Substitute Notice to Our Patients Regarding Privacy Incident

CHI Franciscan Health is committed to protecting the privacy and security of our patients' health information. Regrettably, we are writing to inform you of an incident involving some of that information.

On July 22, 2016, CHI Franciscan learned that an employed physician had been accessing patient clinical information when he had no pre-existing relationship with the patient, to facilitate expansion of his client base. This activity began in July 2015, and involved patient visits at St. Clare Hospital in Lakewood and St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma. Immediately upon learning of the possible wrongdoing, CHI Franciscan took appropriate disciplinary action against the physician. The information viewed included clinical data such as lab results, visit notes and diagnostic test results. The physician did not access your insurance and financial information or your Social Security number and there was no further disclosure.

Federal law requires that health care workers use protected health information in an appropriate manner. CHI Franciscan Health employees and workforce are provided extensive, repeated and ongoing training on HIPAA and other federal and state laws protecting patient information from inappropriate use and disclosure. When evidence of wrongdoing is discovered, CHI Franciscan Health takes immediate responsive action, including appropriate discipline, as we did in this case. Federal law requires us to notify you of this event. There are no steps that you need to take at this time. Your medical records have not been altered and this will not affect your medical care.

We deeply regret any concern this may cause you. CHI Franciscan Health takes its responsibility to protect patient privacy very seriously,

To answer questions regarding this event, we are establishing a call center for your convenience. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the call center at 1-877-309-0186, Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time.