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In this issue:



“It’s the combination of technology, good business processes and people that makes a secure environment.”

Good day!

No one can dispute that health care in the information age has ushered in a whole host of benefits, from the way we manage the entire health care delivery process, to how we operate our financial systems, conduct scientific research, communicate across our hospitals and to the outside world. But, the information age has also brought us a slew of new risks.

Take, for example, the experience of Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital this past February when an outside cyberattack took control of hospital information systems and rendered the hospital helpless in accessing emails, retrieving electronic patient information or availing itself of computer assisted tools, devices or technology. The hospital was brought to its knees in a matter of days and forced to pay a sizeable ransom to regain control of its information systems.

So as the name implies, “ransomware” is malicious software that secretly loads onto a victim’s computer, prevents or limits normal use, then demands a ransom payment to disable it.

According to Jason Morais, chief of security in our information services department, Care New England has been a target of malware creators who have attempted to infect our workstations with ransomware. Through technology and professional vigilance, we have been successful at thwarting recent attempts.

Yet, we—and the health industry as a whole—remain at risk for several reasons. For one reason, the hackers and the spammers seem to stay one step ahead of the good guys figuring out ways to undermine our systems. Another reason that we are vulnerable is because personal health information (PHI) has become one of the favored targets of cyber gangs across the world. They are using PHI to establish fake identities or using the patient number in combination with provider numbers to make false insurance claims. And, unlike a credit card theft which is readily detected and the card easily cancelled, it may be many years before medical identity theft is uncovered, say, for instance, when PHI is stolen from an infant. It is probably the reason, in the estimation of one cyber security firm expert, that stolen PHI is worth 10 or 20 times more than a U.S. credit card number.¹

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Hence, over the past two years in particular, there has been heightened attention by law enforcement and industry professionals to improve security around the cyber environment in health care. At Care New England, we have taken steps through the years to improve the security of our information systems with such initiatives as firewalls, access controls, policies requiring strong passwords, the use of encryption on laptops and removable media, and software on mobile devices to help safeguard PHI. We continue to work toward even greater cybersecurity through new technology and new practices designed to limit unauthorized access to our networks.

But, there is more at stake than our IT infrastructure when it comes to cybercrime. As evidenced by the recent J&J alert regarding medical devices², there is the integrity of our clinical operations. Maintaining the security and confidentiality of our patients as well as our data is a critical focus of the CNE Compliance and Privacy Office, led by Florie Munroe, CNE's chief compliance and privacy officer. It's the combination of technology, good business processes and *people* that makes a secure environment. And, most assuredly, the people who can make a difference in our security go well beyond Jason, Florie and their talented teams. It includes all of us.

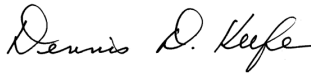
This is why the Compliance and Information Services departments have initiated an educational campaign to advise the Care New England workforce about how we can help keep our information infrastructure safe. There is a new Information Services' Cyber Security page on **carenet** where content will be focusing on a specific topic each month and providing FAQs on that topic.

So, as a reminder on how to protect against malware, the IS team advises us:

- Do not open emails, links or attachments from email addresses you do not recognize.
- Do not open an attachment that comes from a company with which you have never done business.
- If you have clicked on a link or opened an attachment that appears suspicious, stop using the computer or device and contact the IS department immediately by calling the **Help Desk at (401) 921-1000 or emailing HelpDesk@CareNE.org**.

In the fight against cybercrime, vigilance is our number one defense. Thanks for doing your part to help. Have a great week ahead!

Sincerely,



Dennis D. Keefe
President and Chief Executive Officer



¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cybersecurity-hospitals-idUSKCN0HJ21120140924>

² <http://www.wsj.com/articles/j-j-warns-insulin-pump-vulnerable-to-cyber-hacking-1475610989>

Sen. Whitehouse introduces bill to increase federal support for the next generation of Women & Infants clinical specialists

U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced legislation last week that would increase federal funding for medical residency programs at qualifying specialized and safety-net hospitals, including Women & Infants.



"Women & Infants Hospital trains the next generation of health care professionals while providing exceptional care to Rhode Islanders, especially expectant mothers and babies," said Whitehouse. "The hospital's unique specialization, which has benefitted generations of Rhode Island families, unfortunately means that Women & Infants foots more of the bill for its residency program than other hospitals. That's why I introduced the Graduate Medical Education Equity Act, to make sure specialty and safety-net hospitals have the opportunity to receive comparable federal support for their residency programs."

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Women & Infants could gain as much as \$1.5 million in federal funding annually as a direct result of Whitehouse's legislation. The Graduate Medical Education Equity Act would boost federal graduate medical education payments to hospitals such as Women & Infants that see a larger number of Medicaid patients. The bill would help level the playing field for certain specialty and safety-net academic teaching hospitals around the country that invest heavily in training the next generation of clinical specialists without receiving equal direct GME payments. This funding enables teaching hospitals to offer state-of-the-art clinical and educational experiences to medical residents.

"We are extremely thankful to Sen. Whitehouse and his staff for their efforts to help provide a more adequate level of funding for teaching hospitals such as Women & Infants that have traditionally been short-changed under the existing Direct Graduate Medical Education reimbursement formula," said Dennis D. Keefe, president and chief executive officer of Care New England. "While the financial challenges for health care providers continue to increase, it is crucial we find ways to ensure hospitals and health systems such as ours remain financially viable while still being able to support our mission as an academic medical center."

The major teaching affiliate of The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University for activities unique to women and newborns, Women & Infants also maintains teaching relationships with numerous nursing and professional schools, and its research efforts have earned national and international recognition and support. Women & Infants and Brown offer fellowship programs in gynecologic oncology, maternal-fetal medicine, urogynecology and reconstructive pelvic surgery, women's mental health, neonatal-perinatal medicine, pediatric and perinatal pathology, gynecologic pathology and cytopathology, breast disease, obstetric medicine and reproductive endocrinology and infertility.

"Women & Infants serves a very specific and important role for residents of Rhode Island, southeastern New England and beyond," said Mark Marcantano, president and chief operating officer of Women & Infants. "Our ability to adequately train the next generation of women's health specialists while conducting innovative medical research is critical to delivering high-quality care to the patients and families we serve. Sen. Whitehouse's bill shows that he understands the importance of this issue not only for his home state but for the nation as a whole, and we are extremely thankful for his efforts on our behalf."

Memorial named to 'Top Scoring Teaching Hospitals' list in *Consumer Reports*

Memorial Hospital was among the nation's best when it came to hospital-acquired infection rates according to a ranking printed in the most recent issue of *Consumer Reports*. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hospital-acquired infections are the nation's eighth leading cause of death, ahead of flu and pneumonia. *Consumer Reports* rated about 2,000 hospitals using data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that reflect central-line infection rates in intensive care units from January 2011 through December 2015. For the first three years, Memorial recorded zero infections. Despite a slight climb to just below the national average in 2013, the rate dropped again in 2014.



For the entire *Consumer Reports* article and to compare hospitals, go to <http://bit.ly/2gd7fTe>.

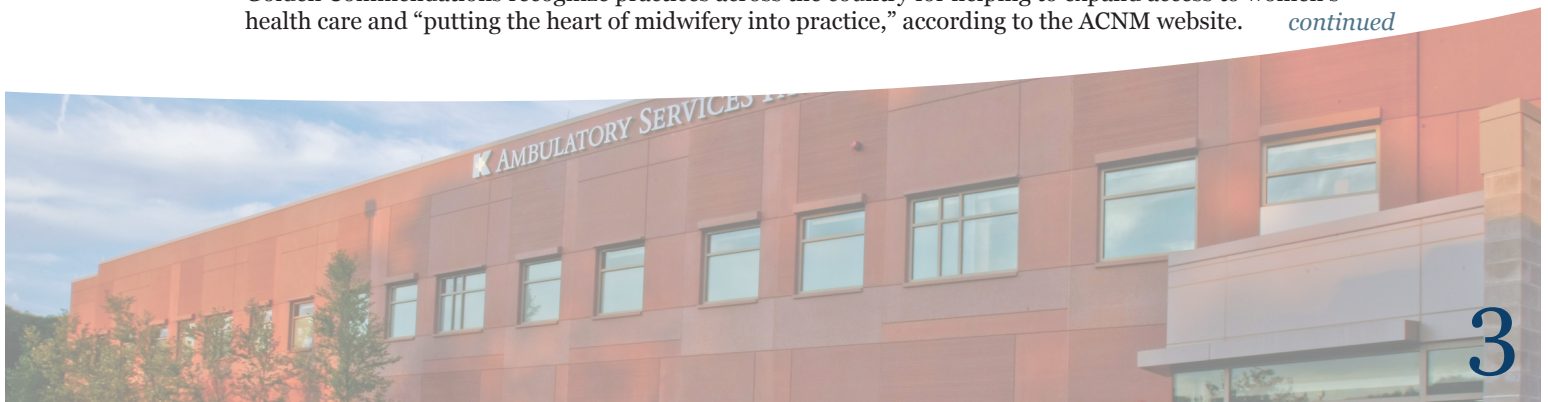
Women's Care midwifery service earns national golden commendation

The American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) recently awarded a Golden Commendation to Women's Care Midwifery Service (<http://www.womenandinfants.org/alliance/womens-care.cfm>), part of the Care New England Medical Group, for providing innovative and compassionate midwifery care to area families. The service was opened in 1996 and provides a full scope of care to women, from teenagers to the elderly.

The practice—which includes Fiona Clement, CNM, MPH; Jennifer Hopley, CNM, MS; Maggie Kuch, CNM, MS; Linda Nanni, CNM, MS, FACNM; Lisa Pile, CNM, MS; Cynthia Siegel, CNM, MS; and Danielle Weisner, CNM, MS—was recognized at the ACNM's recent regional meeting.



Golden Commendations recognize practices across the country for helping to expand access to women's health care and "putting the heart of midwifery into practice," according to the ACNM website. *continued*



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"In addition to offering care in our Providence office, we see patients in Woonsocket, East Greenwich, East Providence, at community health centers in Coventry and Cranston, and at two inner city offices," says Nanni, a founding member of the practice and its current director. "This has allowed the entire population to have access to midwifery services regardless of location, social risk, ethnicity or medical risk."

"The spirit of midwifery lives and breathes within Women's Care," Nanni continues. "We put the patients' needs and desires first. We seek to develop safe plans for birth regardless of whether the patient is low risk or more medically complex and requiring medical collaboration. We are especially enthusiastic about attending some of our births at Women & Infants' Alternative Birthing Center."

Butler Hospital's Elise Reynolds named a Rhode Islander of the Year

Butler Hospital nurse Elise Reynold was selected as one of *Rhode Island Monthly* magazine's Rhode Islanders of the Year. Elise, a nurse on the hospital's Senior Treatment Unit, was recognized for her education and advocacy work for addictions and overdoses in Rhode Island. Elise tragically lost two of her sons, Paul and Teddy, to overdoses, and has since devoted her energy and passion to educating the public, working with local government officials to shape new policies, and supporting other families facing the struggle of addiction.

See the full article, as well as the entire group of Rhode Islanders of the Year, at <http://rimonthly.com>.



The Providence Center's Recovery Navigation Program begins operations

On December 1st, The Providence Center (TPC) officially opened the Recovery Navigation Program, an initiative designed to provide intoxicated people a safe and supportive place to stabilize. Located above the Emmanuel House homeless shelter in South Providence, the program provides treatment to patients who otherwise have limited support and continue to overusing emergency services. The Recovery Navigation team consists of a registered nurse, bilingual case manager, security guard, peer recovery specialists and program manager. Those admitted to the program must:

- Be inebriated.
- Not be medically compromised.
- Not be experiencing alcohol withdrawal symptoms that require medical treatment.
- Be cooperative and agreeable to the program's guidelines.

"We'll be working directly with Emergency Medical Services and hospitals for referrals, utilizing admission and triage procedures and collaborating with community-based organizations," said Lauren D'Andrea, the program's manager. "We are looking forward to working with this complex population and providing them the setting for the best care possible."



The Recovery Navigation Program is located at 239 Public St. (2nd floor), Providence, and is open seven days a week from 1 to 11 p.m. For more information, please call (401) 200-8860.

Kent Hospital offers tips to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

This is the time of year when use of wood burning stoves and other fuel-burning appliances increase the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in the home. The Wound Recovery and Hyperbaric Medicine Center at Kent offers these tips to help keep you safe.



Sources of carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas produced by incomplete burning of fossil fuels – oil, gas, wood, propane and coal. Normally, CO gas is vented safely to the outdoors. However, when vents become blocked by animal nests, improperly installed vent pipes or other means, CO can back up into living spaces and quickly poison the people and pets living there.

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Recognizing carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be hard to recognize – low-level exposure may cause no more than flu-like symptoms while toxic levels build up. If flu-like symptoms quickly improve when you leave the home, suspect carbon monoxide poisoning and seek medical attention and get your house checked right away.

Fire departments carry the equipment to check house levels when poisoning is reported. Higher exposure levels can cause death (often within minutes) or permanent brain and heart injury. Symptoms may include: shortness of breath, nausea, headaches, dizziness and light-headedness.

Treatment

Immediate measures to take include:

- Get everyone—including pets—out of the house and into fresh air immediately, then call 911.
- If you can't get everyone out, open all doors and windows. Turn off any fuel burning appliances.
- Take anyone exposed to carbon monoxide to a hospital emergency room as quickly as possible. A simple blood test will show if carbon monoxide poisoning has occurred and must be done right away.
- Hyperbaric oxygen therapy to quickly dissipate the CO poison is available at Kent Hospital. This can save lives and reduce long-term effects of the poison.

Effects of carbon monoxide poisoning

CO poisoning can kill quickly. Survivors may experience headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain, joint pain, chronic fatigue, dizziness, numbness, tingling or vertigo. They may also have effects such as attention problems, short-term memory problems, irritability, anxiety, and sleep disturbance. Blurry or double vision, buzzing in the ears, decreased coordination, and speaking, eating and swallowing disorders are also possible. Some may even experience seizures, balance problems and tremors.

Prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning

By far, the best approach to this silent killer is prevention. You should:

- Have your heating system and chimney checked each year before the heating season begins.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home, and test them monthly.

The Wound Recovery and Hyperbaric Medicine Center at Kent is a unique regional referral center, staffed by physicians and clinicians who are experienced in advanced wound care and help to heal diabetic ulcers, surgical wounds, ostomy problems, bone infections and other chronic concerns. The center received national accreditation with distinction and offers advanced hyperbaric oxygen chambers, which are available 24-hours a day for emergency referrals needing immediate intervention.

For more information, please call (401) 736-4646. 

