Union Hospital Protects Patient Privacy and Saves Auditors Time with iatricSystems™ Auditor's Desktop™

OBJECTIVE: Union Hospital wanted to save time when investigating potential patient privacy violations, and help privacy auditors focus their investigations on the data access events with the highest degree of risk.

SITUATION: Union Hospital is a 122-bed, full-service community hospital in Elkton, Maryland, serving residents in Cecil County and neighboring communities in Delaware and Pennsylvania. As a user of iatricSystems™ Security Audit Manager™ (SAM), they already had an effective tool for monitoring access to Protected Health Information (PHI) and identifying potential breaches. They wanted to go a step further by analyzing privacy risks and automating their investigations.

SOLUTION: Union Hospital is using iatricSystems Auditor's Desktop™, a software tool that performs risk analysis across multiple audits, ranks possible privacy violations by order of severity, and consolidates the results on a single screen. Patient and user history data are compared side-by-side for easier and faster analysis. From the same screen, auditors can open and track cases and make a final audit determination.

RESULTS: Using Auditor's Desktop, Union Hospital's privacy auditors have the information they need to quickly determine whether a breach occurred and eliminate false positives, without having to individually review multiple audits. As a result, the hospital can more easily protect patient data and ensure patient trust, achieve HIPAA and HITECH compliance, and meet Meaningful Use requirements.

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>
> – Bonnie Davis
>   Director, Application Services
>   Union Hospital, Elkton, MD

Union Hospital is an award-winning, full-service community hospital located in Elkton, Maryland. Nationally recognized for clinical excellence, Union Hospital is also deeply committed to protecting patient privacy and is an early adopter of automated tools that ensure HIPAA compliance. The hospital is a long-time user of iatricSystems Security Audit Manager (SAM) software that proactively monitors all accesses to patient's protected health information (PHI) hospital-wide and detects potential violations in real time. Union Hospital has automated its privacy monitoring even further with iatricSystems Auditor's Desktop, a companion solution that lets privacy auditors spend less time reviewing reports while streamlining the investigation of potential breaches.

Correlates Results from Multiple Audits

"We are big fans of Auditor's Desktop because of the features it offers, such as the ability to quickly see which audits have the greatest probability of inappropriate behavior," says Bonnie Davis, Director, Application Services at Union Hospital. Every night, Auditor's Desktop performs a risk analysis across multiple audits, correlates the assigned weights and identifies possible inappropriate actions ranked by order of severity. The results are presented in one consolidated audit that is sent to privacy auditors on demand. They can then review the ranked results, determine whether the access was appropriate, and take action as needed.

Side by Side Comparison

Auditor's Desktop improves the productivity of Union Hospital's privacy auditors and makes their job easier by bringing together all the information needed for managing audits and making determinations on one screen. "The user interface is amazing," Bonnie adds. "The Preview window saves us a lot of time by showing us everything we need." This web-based screen aligns patient audit information next to user audit information, making it very easy to view relevant information and make an audit determination. "The side-by-side comparison between the patient and the user is huge," Bonnie adds.

Weeds out False Positives

Auditor's Desktop also helps Bonnie and her team reduce the number of false positives so they can focus on PHI accesses that require further investigation. "Auditor's Desktop helps us identify people who show up on a regular basis and have a valid reason. For example, we have someone with a common last name who works in ED billing. The name is associated with every ED patient and we know the risk is minimal because of the role as well as the audit history."

Simplifies Case Management

Bonnie adds that Auditor's Desktop also improves productivity by making it easy to track and manage breach investigations. "We can open a case, track its progress, make a final determination, and add comments that support our findings." Within the same screen, privacy auditors can view and change the status of a case, and decide if it qualifies as a breach that must be reported to federal and state regulators. "Auditor's Desktop is very helpful," Bonnie concludes. "We have already seen productivity gains since using the product."

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