

WHAT'S NEW

HTA welcomes CoreLAB Diagnostics to our growing tech family!

CoreLAB Diagnostics: Medical Reference Laboratory is a clinical and anatomic pathology laboratory serving clients in Missouri and Illinois. Privately owned and operated, they provide several comprehensive solutions for hospitals, physicians, and other laboratories.

CoreLab joined the Healthcare Technology Advisors family in search of best-in-class IT for healthcare practices, and we are proud to have delivered that service. We encourage any of our clients and readers to reach out to CoreLAB for their laboratory expertise and services. You can visit their website at corelabdx.com to learn more.

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2 - Introducing the Jefferson County Growth Association

Best Practice of the Month - HIPAA Security Officer

Page 3 - Pedaler's Jamboree - Get Out and Get Pedaling!

Missouri Magazine's Best of Missouri Winner

Page 4 - What's New in Breach News

- Ransomware Attack

REFERRAL

Join the HTA Advisory Committee!



Have a coffee on us, and get a chance at a FREE iPad.

With our new referral rewards program, every qualified referral enters you into a drawing for a new iPad. Don't miss your chance to win this quarter!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday,
May 8th

Greater St. Louis MGMA
Luncheon 12-1pm at
Spazio Westport

*Quadruple Aim by Melynda Pryor,
Maryville University*

Tuesday,
May 14th

Jefferson County Growth
Association Bi-Annual
Meeting 7am at Frederick's
Banquet & Conference
Center in Festus, MO



See more at:
htadvisorsllc.com/events



Healthcare Technology Advisors

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Derrick Weisbrod & Hugh Anderson, Founding Advisors of Healthcare Technology Advisors.

Our mission is to be trusted advisors guiding healthcare businesses through the complex IT and HIPAA landscape while providing a comprehensive service that always maintains a human touch.



SPOTLIGHT: JEFFERSON COUNTY GROWTH ASSOCIATION



JEFFERSON COUNTY GROWTH ASSOCIATION

Serving Businesses & Encouraging Growth in Jefferson County

On Tuesday, May 14th Derrick Weisbrod will be speaking at the Jefferson County Growth Association (JCGA) Bi-Annual Meeting as their featured guest speaker for their breakfast meeting. Initially formed in 1988 to promote Jefferson County to home buyers, builders, and developers, the group evolved over the years to promote businesses of all types in Jefferson County, and formally reorganized into the JCGA in 2012.

The JCGA focuses its efforts in promoting legislation, commerce, tourism, and industry. It facilitates interaction with legislators by hosting a State of the County address, Legislative Forum and Reception,

and a Meet the Candidates event. The JCGA promotes local commerce by educating the public on the many benefits of shopping locally through its Shop Jefferson County campaign, including how local commerce helps to grow the community and demonstrating how sales tax contributes to supporting local police, libraries, and schools. The organization also collaborates with several other groups and institutions, including the Chamber of Commerce and Jefferson College, to create opportunities for networking between local businesses and offer educational presentations and speakers at various meetings. In tandem with that, the JCGA also promotes local events hosted by members and works to encourage tourism to Jefferson County's many hidden gems.

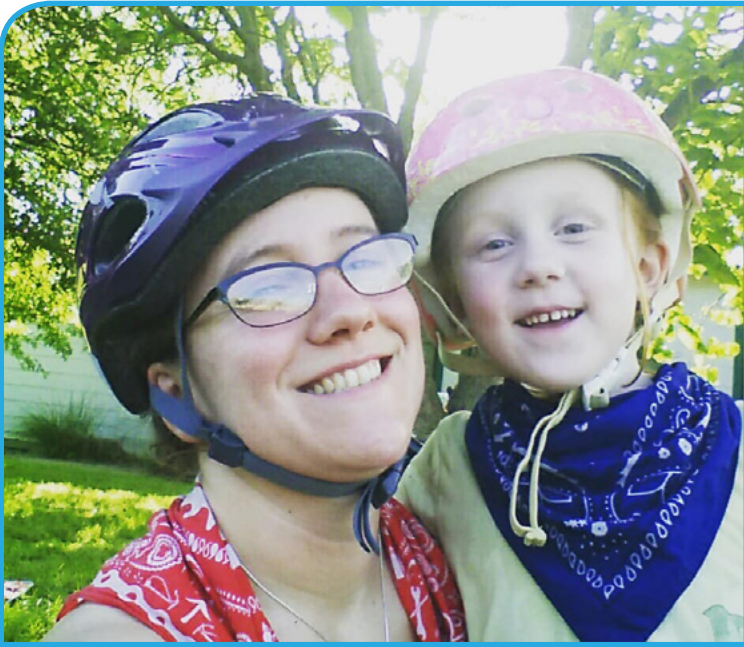
BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH: HIPAA SECURITY OFFICER

This month HTA is focusing on the HIPAA Security Officer role within independent healthcare practices. The HIPAA Security Officer is defined in section 164.308 of the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations as the security official who is responsible for the development and implementation of the policies and procedures required by this section for the covered entity or business associate. Their duties include conducting risk assessments to cover every aspect of the Security Rule's Safeguards, and using that data to develop remediation plans, employee training programs, and incident management procedures, as well as overseeing all Business Associate Agreements.

The HIPAA Security Officer is generally the one person in a small organization who is tasked with maintaining the practice's HIPAA compliance through tracking audits, training, and procedures. Though every person is responsible for following the proper procedures, the security officer makes sure nothing falls through the cracks, and in the case of a breach, they are the ones who implement the incident management and remediation procedures. Even in a small practice, it is important to have one person singled out as the 'lead' in this department, who can take on that responsibility and not have it be forgotten under a pile of more pressing issues.

What is the danger of NOT having a HIPAA Security Officer? To begin with, not having one is itself a HIPAA violation. This role is required under the law. However, the bigger danger is the inherent oversight risk of not having a person dedicating some amount of time and attention to compliance. Without performing security risk assessments, without tracking employee training on compliance procedures, without having remediation plans in place, any breach that occurs will have drastically increased ramifications in data loss and the risk of fines. When deciding on a fine settlement, the Office of Civil Rights greatly weighs whether an institution took steps to be compliant before and after a breach was discovered. Having a person in charge of shepherding your practice's compliance can not only help prevent breaches, but greatly reduce liability if one occurs.

Healthcare Technology Advisors recommends having a dedicated employee in the role of HIPAA Security Officer. In most independent practices, that person also has other duties, be they a managing physician, a nurse practitioner, or the practice administrator. In this case it is important that they are given the necessary support to carry out their compliance duties. Many third parties offer support through software or consulting to assist with the internal auditing, and of course HTA offers comprehensive compliance services including security risk assessments. These solutions can streamline the Security Officer's role and make it feasible to remain compliant while also running your practice profitably.



PEDALER'S JAMBOREE - GET OUT AND GET PEDALING!

One of Missouri's great outdoor treasures is the Katy Trail, a bike and walking path that stretches from trailheads at Machens to Clinton, MO largely along the Missouri river in the railbed of the historic Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT or Katy) railroad line. On Memorial Day Weekend, for the last 10 years, a growing troupe of intrepid cyclers have hit the trail as part of the Pedaler's Jamboree, a two-day group ride on the Katy Trail from Columbia to Booneville, MO and back.

Several members of the HTA team make a point to take part in this ride every year, or at least as often as possible! The ride starts on Saturday in Columbia, MO, and concludes in an overnight concert-and-camping (and let's be honest passing out because all-day-bike-ride) event in Kemper park in Booneville, a mere 30-mile jaunt down the trail. The next day riders head the 30 miles back to Columbia. Along the trail they are treated to local vendors and live music on both days. The family-friendly event sees riders of all ages and abilities, with ample help for anyone in need of it.

This year three members of HTA will be taking on the trail. It's an awesome opportunity to do three things our team loves; Enjoy Nature, Get Exercise, and Listen to Great Live Music!

MISSOURI MAGAZINE'S BEST OF MISSOURI WINNER

This month Derrick Weisbrod attended the Missouri Magazine's Best of Missouri award ceremony to accept the prize for Best Computer & IT Services. The red-carpet event was held in Camdenton, Missouri and attended by the lovely Miss Missouri and Miss Fleur de Lis.

The third annual Missouri's Best competition saw hundreds of local businesses nominated and was decided by over 100,000 votes. Businesses from every corner of the Show Me State vied for top honors across dozens of categories, and many of the winners were able to attend the ceremony to accept their award in beautiful Lake of the Ozarks country.



APRIL 2019

BREAKING! LATEST BREACH NEWS!

RANSOMWARE SHUTS DOWN PRACTICE OVER \$6500!

The healthcare sector has been hearing about ransomware and its dangers for years now. A recent breach headline highlights just how devastating this type of attack can be if a practice is ill prepared for it. In Battle Creek, Michigan, a two-doctor practice found their system encrypted with ransomware. The Brookside ENT and Hearing Center could not access their patient records, appointment schedule, or payment information that was housed in their servers, effectively shutting down the practice until the problem was dealt with.

Of course, the attackers offered a decryption key for ransom; \$6,500 dollars to restore access to all of the practice's records. However, William Scalf, MD and John Bizon, MD, the two owners of Brookside ENT and Hearing Center, decided not to pay this sum. Their reasoning was that, since the attackers could not offer a guarantee that the files would be decrypted, there was nothing to stop them simply demanding another payment. Perhaps the doctors thought that the threat would dissipate, or that there would be some opportunity to negotiate. However, this was not the case. In the absence of payment, the attackers deleted all files on the practice's system. No information was recoverable. Rather than trying to rebuild all the information that was lost, the two doctors decided to take early retirement and closed their practice for good.

This conclusion is troubling for a number of reasons. A practice with proper back-ups would have been able to simply restore their data from a secure copy kept off-premise or in the cloud, and never worry about paying the ransom.

Perhaps a day or two of data may have been lost in the transition, but the vast majority of patient data and practice records would be safe. It is clear from the way this worked out that the practice did not have the option to restore their system from a backup.

However, the more troubling outcome is the loss of patient records. The doctors making a judgement call on whether they want to do the work of rebuilding their practice is a call they get to make. But patient's losing the records of tests, visits, and even surgeries due to this practice not having data backed up is unconscionable. This may lead to great cost to some patients who may need to retake tests to get results that were lost. One patient reported having to find a new practice to take her daughter to for a follow up appointment after a surgery, but without any of the records from that surgery.

The Brookside ENT and Hearing Center will officially close on April 30th due to loss of all operating data. It should be noted that not possessing recoverable patient records is a violation of HIPAA rules, and even with the practice closed the doctors may be at risk of a HIPAA fine for not maintaining their records for the appropriate amount of time. While such ransomware attacks and breaches are not always avoidable, such a total loss is easily prevented with comprehensive backup solutions. Every practice should review and test their backup procedures as part of their basic HIPAA compliance activities.

Healthcare Technology Advisors offers comprehensive compliance services and consulting. Call (314)312-4701 today to schedule a meeting with Derrick Weisbrod if you feel your practice's compliance may be at risk.