

## VLP Partner Michael Whitener Interviewed by Inside Counsel in the Article “Why Health Records Are So Valuable to Cybercriminals”

VLP Partner Michael Whitener sat down with *Inside Counsel* to discuss “Why Health Records Are So Valuable to Cybercriminals.” Mr. Whitener said medical records contain an abundance of personal information, including a person’s name, social security number, birth date, policy number, diagnosis codes and so on.

“If a cyber-criminal gets his hands on that information, it can be exploited in several ways, including submitting false medical claims, acquiring controlled and prescription substances, creating fake identities, extorting patients, accessing government benefits, and obtaining medical devices,” he explained.

Mr. Whitener also noted that the information contained in medical records is frequently information that can’t be changed, unlike credit card or bank information – so the cyber-criminal can exploit it for a long time. Also there can be a long lag time between the health record theft and the discovery of the theft, if it’s discovered at all.

“When your credit card is stolen or your bank credentials are compromised, notifications to the victims are often triggered, and there are consumer protections provided under the Fair Credit Billing Act,” Mr. Whitener said. “No such standard triggers or protections are available for health record thefts.”

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