

Did you know?..... **RX** Information from Jenny

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MEDICAL IDENTITY THEFT

Medical identity theft is when someone's personal information is used, without permission, to get money, prescription medicines or medical services. Examples: a person uses someone else's name & info to have a surgery, causing that person to be billed for the surgery; a group of criminals uses info stolen from a health clinic to bill the insurances of individuals for services that were not actually provided. This can cost the victim thousands of dollars. Medical identity theft can also involve the addition of false or incorrect info to a person's health records. This is dangerous because it could cause you to be treated incorrectly by a doctor, based on the false info.

Medical identity theft can be hard to detect. The best thing you can do is pay attention to ALL documentation pertaining to your healthcare:

- Review all insurance statements & bills for accuracy
- Request summaries each year of what your insurance(s) paid—if you see something wrong, contact your insurer or healthcare provider immediately.
- Review your credit report regularly—it may contain collection notices for hospitals, medical labs, etc. if you are a victim.
- It may be pricey, but you can request copies of your medical records to review them for accuracy.
- Ask for a list (called an "Accounting of Disclosures") of who your medical info has been given to.
- Always notify your insurance company if you lose your insurance card.

If you suspect that you are a victim of medical identity theft, you may need to deal with both credit problems and incorrect info in your medical records. The following list will help ensure you cover all your bases:

- Check insurance benefits paid to you in the last year.
- Check your credit report. If there are incorrect charges, you will need to contact the billing department of the provider who is billing you to explain that this is a case of identity theft.
- File a police report, and get a copy for yourself.
- Get a copy of your medical records and correct any info that is false.
- Get a list of disclosures of your medical records, so you know who else might have the incorrect info (insurances, providers, etc.)
- Be sure to notify all of your providers of the incorrect info in your medical records.

IDENTITY THEFT RESOURCES:

- * Identity Theft Resource Center 858-693-7935
www.idtheftcenter.org
- * Department of Health & Human Services 800-368-1019
www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaahowto.pdf
www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/consumer_summary.pdf

Answers to questions from May monthly meeting:

- 1) The manufacturer of Walmart's Lisinopril is an American manufacturer, not an overseas manufacturer. Also, the pharmacy within Walmart is owned by Walmart, not an outside company or third party.
- 2) The patent for Restasis is not due to expire until August 2009, so next year would be the earliest that a generic may come out for it.

As always, don't hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Jenny Aveson