

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR PATIENTS

As part of Southwest General Hospital's commitment to patient privacy and the security of patient information, we wanted to make you aware of a recent incident at the hospital that impacted the personal information of a limited number of patients who received care at the hospital between December 2015 and August 2016.

WHAT HAPPENED

On December 30, 2019, Southwest General Hospital became aware that written notes by a member of the clinical care team during the time referenced above were discovered by an individual in the community. The information contained in the notes consisted of patient labels that included full patient name, date of birth, and medical record number as well as very limited clinical information related to diagnosis, condition and treatment. The information did not include full or partial social security number, home address, or any financial information. There is no indication that the individual who had access to these unsecured notes has misused any patient's information in any way that might cause harm, and the notes were returned to the hospital.

STEPS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN, AND ARE BEING TAKEN FOLLOWING THIS INCIDENT

Upon learning of this issue, Southwest General Hospital took immediate steps to secure the documents and promptly began an investigation. The hospital has determined this incident resulted from an unintended error. The hospital has conducted additional training to its employees about securing all protected health information in accordance with hospital policy and that no patient information should be in possession of an employee outside of the hospital. All affected patients have been notified by mail about this unfortunate incident.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO ENSURE THAT YOUR DATA IS NOT MISUSED

We deeply regret this situation and any inconvenience caused to patients. We have no evidence that information involved in this incident has been improperly used. However, we encourage affected individuals to take precautions to protect the security of their personal information, including promptly reporting any suspicious activity or suspected identity theft to law enforcement.

Southwest General Hospital has the utmost concern for our patients' privacy and takes measure to ensure that those with whom we share confidential information maintain appropriate and responsible safeguards to prevent unauthorized access to that information. Once again, we sincerely apologize for any inconvenience that this incident may have caused any of our patients or their families. We take the confidentiality of your information very seriously and will continue to work to ensure that a similar incident does not occur in the future. Anyone who received a letter regarding this breach or who feels they may be part of this breach may contact Southwest General Hospital with any questions toll free at 877-302-4378 or email steward@compliance.org