

Leveraging physicians to reduce cybersecurity risk

In 2016, the number of tracked data breaches in the U.S. reached an all-time high, with healthcare having the second-highest number.¹ In addition, more than 75 percent of healthcare organizations have been infected with malware in 2016.²

The healthcare industry, guardian of the most personal data imaginable, recognizes the importance of having a robust security profile. The industry's secret weapon? Physicians. "Hospitals can partner with doctors to create a culture of security by taking simple steps," said Jason Porter, vice president, AT&T Security Solutions.

The first step is understanding how data and devices fit into a physician's workday. Gaining that understanding can be as simple as making physicians part of the hospital's security team or having hospital IT and security teams shadow physicians throughout their work day to see what challenges physicians face and what IT and security workarounds they employ.

Another tactic is creating formal systems and structures for physician involvement in security decisions. A committee that brings together IT and security team members with physicians gives these groups an opportunity to understand needs and collaborate on creating guidelines and solutions.

Bringing the message home through regular training sessions and simulated cyberattacks helps physicians understand how easy it is to fall victim to such attempts, reminds them why cybersecurity protocols are important and keeps their awareness raised.

Establishing a culture of security

Partnering with physicians following the simple steps outlined above is a good place to start, but hospitals should resist the temptation of cobbling together some sort of security plan, said Porter.

Sometimes a robust security plan must be rolled out in stages. All the financial resources may not be available in any given year, and it takes time to build a culture of security. Hospitals can make the most of available resources by partnering with experts, such as AT&T's Security Consulting Services. "Don't rely on homegrown tools to fight an autonomous attacker," Porter said. "Use the best technology and services you can find to protect the lives of your patients and the reputation of your organization."

A trusted partner helps hospitals assess risks and needs, and creates customized plans for hospitals, according to Porter. "Having an unbiased partner identify the people, processes and assets necessary to establish and maintain an active and flexible security model is imperative to establishing the right controls and culture associated with a best-in-class model," he said.

A partner with experience establishing and maintaining a culture of security is a vital ally for hospitals. "Culture manages how the employees approach each effort," said Porter. "Without a culture, employees would just default to trusting the tools to detect and remediate any potential issue. As threats morph and adjust to tools or security controls, the protection of the network again rests on the culture of security to identify potential problems."

To learn more about what AT&T can do for your healthcare organization, go to corp.att.com/healthcare. To learn more about AT&T's Cybersecurity Services, which can help you connect and protect your healthcare assets, go to business.att.com/enterprise/Portfolio/cybersecurity.



Jason Porter
AT&T Security Solutions

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2. A Cision Company Report, Oct 2016. *PR News Wire – A Cision Company Report, Oct 2016

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