

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

KATHERINE NEGRON , individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,)	
)	
<i>Plaintiff</i> ,)	Case No.: 1:24-cv-0857
vs.)	CLASS ACTION
)	
ASCENSION HEALTH)	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
)	
<i>Defendant.</i>)	

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, Katherine Negron (“Plaintiff”) brings this Class Action Complaint (“Complaint”) against Ascension Health, a non-profit Missouri entity (“Ascension” or “Defendant”), as an individual and on behalf of all others similarly situated, and alleges, upon personal knowledge as to her own actions and her counsels’ investigation, and upon information and belief as to all other matters, as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This is a civil action seeking monetary damages and injunctive and declaratory relief from Defendant Ascension, arising from its failure to safeguard certain Personally Identifying Information (“PII”) and Protected Health Information (“PHI”) (collectively, “Personal Information”) and other sensitive, non-public information (collectively, “Personal Information”) of thousands of its patients resulting in a cyberattack of and unauthorized access of Defendant’s network systems on or about May 9, 2024.

2. Moreover, as an ongoing harm resulting from the Data Breach, Plaintiffs and Class Members are unable to effectively communicate with their healthcare providers and/or receive the requisite medical care and attention they need for months following the Data Breach because

Ascension's network systems, including its MyChart patient portal, remained offline and were inaccessible to patients. The MyChart patient portal is the primary way Ascension providers communicate with patients and families and patients have access to their records.

3. On information and belief, on or around May 9, 2024, Ascension's network systems were unauthorizedly accessed in a ransomware attack, resulting in the unauthorized disclosure of the Personal Information of Plaintiffs and the Class Members, including names, dates of birth, patient records, Social Security numbers, and other PHI (the "Data Breach").

4. As explained below, Plaintiffs and Members of the Class have suffered significant injury and damages due to the Data Breach permitted to occur by Ascension, and the resulting misuse of their Personal Information and fraudulent activity, including monetary damages including out-of-pocket expenses, including those associated with the reasonable mitigation measures they were forced to employ, and other damages. Plaintiff and the Class also now forever face an amplified risk of *further* misuse, fraud, and identity theft due to their sensitive Personal Information falling into the hands of cybercriminals as a result of the tortious conduct of Defendant.

5. On behalf of themselves and the Class preliminarily defined below, Plaintiff bring causes of action for negligence, negligence *per se*, breach of implied contractual duties, in the alternative unjust enrichment, and violation of the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. Plaintiff seek damages and injunctive and declaratory relief arising from Ascension's failure to adequately protect their highly sensitive Personal Information.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

6. This class action arises out of a reported May 9, 2024 cybersecurity incident, resulting in a data breach (“Data Breach”) from Ascension's failure to implement reasonable and industry standard data security practices.

7. According to the Defendant’s website, Ascension is one of the nation’s leading non-profit and Catholic health systems. Ascension includes approximately 134,000 associates, 35,000 affiliated providers and 140 hospitals, serving communities in 19 states and the District of Columbia.

8. On May 10, 2024, the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released a statement that the Black Basta gang is targeting US critical infrastructure, including the healthcare sector.

https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/aa24-131a-joint-csa-stopransomware-black-basta_0.pdf

9. According to CRN, it was the Black Basta Ransomware attack that brought down Ascension IT Systems. See: <https://www.crn.com/news/security/2024/black-basta-ransomware-attack-brought-down-ascension-it-systems-report>

10. Four sources briefed on the investigation told CNN that Ascension suffered a ransomware attack, in which cybercriminals typically try to lock computers and steal data for extortion. See: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/10/tech/cyberattack-ascension-ambulances-hospitals/index.html>

11. On or about May 11, 2024, *USA Today* reported, “Health care workers at Ascension Wisconsin sites reported not having access to Epic, the system used for storing patients' medical information and managing their care.” See: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/hospitals->

across-us-disrupted-after-cyberattack-targets-healthcare-titan-ascencion/ar-
BB1m7LID?ocid=BingNewsSearch

12. Plaintiff's and Class Members' sensitive personal information—which they entrusted to Defendant on the mutual understanding that Defendant would protect it against disclosure—was compromised and unlawfully accessed due to the Data Breach.

13. Ascension collected and maintained certain personally identifiable information of Plaintiff and the putative Class Members (defined below), who are (or were) patients at Ascension and/or Ascension's patients.

14. The Private Information compromised in the Data Breach included Plaintiff's and Class Members' "personally identifiable information" ("PII") and medical information, which is protected health information ("PHI", and collectively with PII, "Private Information") as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA").

15. The Private Information compromised in the Data Breach was exfiltrated by cyber-criminals and remains in the hands of those cyber-criminals who target Private Information for its value to identity thieves.

16. As a result of the Data Breach, Plaintiff and Class Members, suffered concrete injuries in fact including, but not limited to: (i) invasion of privacy; (ii) theft of their Private Information; (iii) lost or diminished value of Private Information; (iv) lost time and opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (v) loss of benefit of the bargain; (vi) lost opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (vii) statutory damages; (viii) nominal damages; and (ix) the continued and certainly increased risk to their Private Information, which: (a) remains unencrypted and available for unauthorized third parties to access and abuse; and (b) remains

backed up in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information.

17. The Data Breach was a direct result of Defendant's failure to implement adequate and reasonable cyber-security procedures and protocols necessary to protect patients' Private Information from a foreseeable and preventable cyber-attack.

18. Defendant maintained the Private Information in a reckless manner. In particular, the Private Information was maintained on Defendant's computer network in a condition vulnerable to cyberattacks. Upon information and belief, the mechanism of the cyberattack and potential for improper disclosure of Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information was a known risk to Defendant, and thus, Defendant was on notice that failing to take steps necessary to secure the Private Information from those risks left that property in a dangerous condition.

19. Defendant disregarded the rights of Plaintiff and Class Members by, *inter alia*, intentionally, willfully, recklessly, or negligently failing to take adequate and reasonable measures to ensure its data systems were protected against unauthorized intrusions; failing to disclose that they did not have adequately robust computer systems and security practices to safeguard Class Members' Private Information; failing to take standard and reasonably available steps to prevent the Data Breach; and failing to provide Plaintiff and Class Members prompt and accurate notice of the Data Breach.

20. Plaintiff's and Class Members' identities are now at risk because of Defendant's negligent conduct because the Private Information that Defendant collected and maintained is now in the hands of data thieves.

21. Armed with the Private Information accessed in the Data Breach, data thieves have most likely engaged in identity theft and fraud and can in the future commit a variety of crimes

including, *e.g.*, opening new financial accounts in Class Members' names, taken out loans in Class Members' names, using Class Members' information to obtain government benefits, filing fraudulent tax returns using Class Members' information, obtaining driver's licenses in Class Members' names but with another person's photograph, and giving false information to police during an arrest.

22. As a result of the Data Breach, Plaintiff and Class Members have been exposed to a heightened and imminent risk of fraud and identity theft. Plaintiff and Class Members must now and in the future closely monitor their financial accounts to guard against identity theft.

23. Plaintiff and Class Members may also incur out of pocket costs, *e.g.*, for purchasing credit monitoring services, credit freezes, credit reports, or other protective measures to deter and detect identity theft.

24. Plaintiff brings this class action lawsuit on behalf all those similarly situated to address Defendant's inadequate safeguarding of Class Members' Private Information that it collected and maintained, and for failing to provide timely and adequate notice to Plaintiff and other Class Members that their information had been subject to the unauthorized access by an unknown third party and precisely what specific type of information was accessed.

25. Through this Complaint, Plaintiff seeks to remedy these harms on behalf of herself and all similarly situated individuals whose Private Information was accessed during the Data Breach.

26. Plaintiff seeks remedies including, but not limited to, compensatory damages and injunctive relief including improvements to Defendant's data security systems, future annual audits, and adequate credit monitoring services funded by Defendant.

PARTIES

27. Plaintiff, Katherine Negron, is a resident of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois and has been a patient of Ascension Saint Mary-Chicago for the past sixteen years. Ascension Saint Mary is located at: 2233 W. Division St, Chicago, IL 60622. Defendant obtained and stored Plaintiff's PII and PHI in connection with her treatment at Defendant's facility.

28. Defendant, Ascension Health, is a non-profit corporation properly recognized and sanctioned by the laws of the State of Missouri, with its headquarters located at 4600 Edmundson Road, St., St. Louis, Missouri 63134, in the County of St. Louis.

29. Defendant, Ascension has 140 hospitals, serving communities in 19 states and the District of Columbia.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

30. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action under 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d) because this is a class action wherein the amount in controversy exceeds the sum or value of \$5,000,000, exclusive of interest and costs, there are thousands of members in the proposed class, and at least one member of the class, is a citizen of a state different from Defendant.

31. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because its principal place of business is in Missouri, regularly conducts in 19 States.

32. The acts and omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in and emanated from this District.

33. Venue is proper under 18 U.S.C § 1391(b)(1) because Defendant operates a number of hospitals in this District, and the data breach of the Plaintiff took place in this District.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

Background

34. Defendant is a healthcare company that provides hospital care and medical care services to approximately 35,000 affiliated providers and 140 hospitals, serving communities in 19 states and the District of Columbia.

35. Plaintiff and Class Members are current and former patients at Defendant and/or Defendant's clients.

36. Upon information and belief, in the course of collecting Private Information from patients, including Plaintiff, Defendant promised to provide confidentiality for patient data through its applicable privacy policy and through other disclosures in compliance with statutory privacy requirements.

37. Defendant provides on its website that:

Our Commitment: "We are committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of your health information."

Our Responsibilities: "We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your health information."¹

38. In the course of their relationship, patients, including Plaintiff and Class Members, provided Defendant with their Private Information, which Defendant could not perform its regular business operations without.

¹ <https://healthcare.ascension.org/npp>

39. Plaintiff and Class Members, as former and current patients of Defendant and/or Defendant's clients, relied on these promises and on this sophisticated business entity to keep their sensitive Private Information confidential and securely maintained, to use this information for business purposes only, and to make only authorized disclosures of this information. Patients, in general, demand security to safeguard their Private Information, especially when PHI and other sensitive Private Information is involved.

The Cybersecurity Data Breach

40. In an online notice published to Defendant's website (the "Notice") on May 9, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. Central Time, Defendant asserts that:

"On May 8, Ascension detected unusual activity in our network systems. We have determined this is a cybersecurity incident. We are working around the clock with internal and external advisors to investigate, contain, and restore our systems following a thorough validation and screening process."

"Systems that are currently unavailable include our electronic health records system, MyChart (which enables patients to view their medical records and communicate with their providers), some phone systems, and various systems utilized to order certain tests, procedures and medications. We have implemented established protocols and procedures to address these particular system disruptions in order to continue to provide safe care to patients."

41. Omitted from the Notice Letter were the root cause of the cybersecurity incident, the vulnerabilities exploited, and the remedial measures undertaken to ensure such a breach does not occur again. To date, these omitted details have not been explained or clarified to Plaintiff and Class Members, who retain a vested interest in ensuring that their Private Information remains protected.

42. Upon information and belief, the cyberattack was targeted at Defendant, due to its status as a healthcare entity that collects, creates, and maintains Private Information on its computer networks and/or systems.

43. The files containing Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information, that were targeted and stolen from Defendant.

44. Because of this targeted cyberattack, data thieves were able to gain access to and obtain data from Defendant that included the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

45. According to CRN, it was the Black Basta Ransomware attack that brought down Ascension IT Systems.²

46. This was supported by CNN that reported Ascension suffered a ransomware attack, in which cybercriminals typically try to lock computers and steal data for extortion.³

47. As evidenced by the Data Breach's occurrence, the Private Information contained in Defendant's network was not encrypted. Had the information been properly encrypted, the data thieves would have exfiltrated only unintelligible data.

48. Plaintiff further believes that his and Class Members' Private Information has been or soon will be disseminated on the dark web, to be available for purchase, because that is the *modus operandi* of cybercriminals.

² <https://www.crn.com/news/security/2024/black-basta-ransomware-attack-brought-down-ascension-it-systems-report>

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/10/tech/cyberattack-ascension-ambulances-hospitals/index.html>

49. Defendant had obligations created by the FTC Act, HIPAA, contract, state and federal law, common law, and industry standards to keep Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information confidential and to protect it from unauthorized access and disclosure.

Data Breaches Are Preventable

50. Defendant did not use reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature of the sensitive information they were maintaining for Plaintiff and Class Members, causing the exposure of Private Information, such as encrypting the information or deleting it when it is no longer needed.

51. Defendant could have prevented this Data Breach by, among other things, properly encrypting or otherwise protecting their equipment and computer files containing Private Information.

52. To prevent and detect cyber-attacks and/or ransomware attacks Defendant could and should have implemented, as recommended by the United States Government, the following measures:

- a. Implement an awareness and training program. Because end users are targets, patients and individuals should be aware of the threat of ransomware and how it is delivered.
- b. Enable strong spam filters to prevent phishing emails from reaching the end users and authenticate inbound email using technologies like Sender Policy Framework (SPF), Domain Message Authentication Reporting and Conformance (DMARC), and DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM) to prevent email spoofing.
- c. Scan all incoming and outgoing emails to detect threats and filter executable files from reaching end users.
- d. Configure firewalls to block access to known malicious IP addresses.
- e. Patch operating systems, software, and firmware on devices. Consider using a centralized patch management system.

- f. Set anti-virus and anti-malware programs to conduct regular scans automatically.
- g. Manage the use of privileged accounts based on the principle of least privilege: no users should be assigned administrative access unless absolutely needed; and those with a need for administrator accounts should only use them when necessary.
- h. Configure access controls—including file, directory, and network share permissions—with least privilege in mind. If a user only needs to read specific files, the user should not have write access to those files, directories, or shares.
- i. Disable macro scripts from office files transmitted via email. Consider using Office Viewer software to open Microsoft Office files transmitted via email instead of full office suite applications.
- j. Implement Software Restriction Policies (SRP) or other controls to prevent programs from executing from common ransomware locations, such as temporary folders supporting popular Internet browsers or compression/decompression programs, including the AppData/LocalAppData folder.
- k. Consider disabling Remote Desktop protocol (RDP) if it is not being used.
- l. Use application whitelisting, which only allows systems to execute programs known and permitted by security policy.
- m. Execute operating system environments or specific programs in a virtualized environment.
- n. Categorize data based on organizational value and implement physical and logical separation of networks and data for different organizational units.⁴

⁴ *Id.* at 3-4.

53. Given that Defendant was storing the Private Information of its current and former patients and its clients' patients, Defendant could and should have implemented all of the above measures to prevent and detect cyberattacks.

54. The occurrence of the Data Breach indicates that Defendant failed to adequately implement one or more of the above measures to prevent cyberattacks, resulting in the Data Breach and, upon information and belief, the exposure of the Private Information of thousands to tens of thousands of patients, including that of Plaintiff and Class Members.

Defendant Acquires, Collects, And Stores Patients' Private Information

55. Defendant acquires, collects, and stores a massive amount of Private Information on its patients, its clients' patients, and other personnel.

56. As a condition of obtaining medical services at Ascension and/or Ascension's clients, Defendant requires that patients entrust it with highly sensitive personal information.

57. By obtaining, collecting, and using Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information, Defendant assumed legal and equitable duties and knew or should have known that it was responsible for protecting Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information from disclosure.

58. Plaintiff and the Class Members have taken reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of their Private Information and would not have entrusted it to Defendant absent a promise to safeguard that information.

59. Plaintiff and the Class Members relied on Defendant to keep their Private Information confidential and securely maintained, to use this information for business purposes only, and to make only authorized disclosures of this information.

Defendant Knew or Should Have Known of the Risk Because Healthcare Entities In Possession Of Private Information Are Particularly Susceptable To Cyber Attacks

60. Defendant's data security obligations were particularly important given the substantial increase in cyber-attacks and/or data breaches targeting healthcare entities that collect and store Private Information, like Defendant, preceding the date of the breach.

61. Data breaches, including those perpetrated against healthcare entities that store Private Information in their systems, have become widespread.

62. According to the *2023 Annual Data Breach Report*, the number of data compromises in 2023 (3,205) increased by 78 percentage points compared to 2022 (1,801).⁵ The ITRC set a new record for the number of data compromises tracked in a year, up 72 percentage points from the previous all-time high in 2021 (1,860).

63. In light of recent high profile cybersecurity incidents at other healthcare partner and provider companies, including American Medical Collection Agency (25 million patients, March 2019), University of Washington Medicine (974,000 patients, December 2018), Florida Orthopedic Institute (640,000 patients, July 2020), Wolverine Solutions Group (600,000 patients, September 2018), Oregon Department of Human Services (645,000 patients, March 2019), Elite Emergency Physicians (550,000 patients, June 2020), Magellan Health (365,000 patients, April 2020), and BJC Health System (286,876 patients, March 2020), Defendant knew or should have known that its electronic records would be targeted by cybercriminals.

⁵ <https://www.idtheftcenter.org/publication/2023-data-breach-report/>

64. On March 15, 2024, the Department of Health and Human Services sent out a bulletin to warn health and public health sector organizations that Black Basta is a credible threat to the sector.⁶

65. Defendant knew and understood unprotected or exposed Private Information in the custody of healthcare entities, like Defendant, is valuable and highly sought after by nefarious third parties seeking to illegally monetize that Private Information through unauthorized access.

66. At all relevant times, Defendant knew, or reasonably should have known, of the importance of safeguarding the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members and of the foreseeable consequences that would occur if Defendant's data security system was breached, including, specifically, the significant costs that would be imposed on Plaintiff and Class Members as a result of a breach.

67. Plaintiff and Class Members now face years of constant surveillance of their financial and personal records, monitoring, and loss of rights. The Class is incurring and will continue to incur such damages in addition to any fraudulent use of their Private Information.

68. The injuries to Plaintiff and Class Members were directly and proximately caused by Defendant's failure to implement or maintain adequate data security measures for the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

69. The ramifications of Defendant's failure to keep secure the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members are long lasting and severe. Once Private Information is stolen, fraudulent use of that information and damage to victims may continue for years.

⁶ <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/black-basta-threat-profile.pdf>

70. As a healthcare entity in custody of its patients' and its clients' patients' Private Information, Defendant knew, or should have known, the importance of safeguarding Private Information entrusted to them by Plaintiff and Class Members, and of the foreseeable consequences if its data security systems were breached. This includes the significant costs imposed on Plaintiff and Class Members as a result of a breach. Defendant failed, however, to take adequate cybersecurity measures to prevent the Data Breach.

Value Of Personally Identifiable Information

71. The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) defines identity theft as “a fraud committed or attempted using the identifying information of another person without authority.”⁷ The FTC describes “identifying information” as “any name or number that may be used, alone or in conjunction with any other information, to identify a specific person,” including, among other things, “[n]ame, Social Security number, date of birth, official State or government issued driver’s license or identification number, alien registration number, government passport number, employer or taxpayer identification number.”⁸

72. The PII of individuals remains of high value to criminals, as evidenced by the prices they will pay through the dark web. Numerous sources cite dark web pricing for stolen identity credentials.⁹

⁷ 17 C.F.R. § 248.201 (2013).

⁸ *9 Id.*

⁹ *Your personal data is for sale on the dark web. Here’s how much it costs*, Digital Trends, Oct. 16, 2019, available at: <https://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/personal-data-sold-on-the-darkweb-how-much-it-costs/> (last visited Oct. 17, 2022).

73. For example, PII can be sold at a price ranging from \$40 to \$200.¹⁰

Criminals can also purchase access to entire company data breaches from \$900 to \$4,500.¹¹

74. PII can sell for as much as \$363 per record according to the Infosec Institute.¹² PII is particularly valuable because criminals can use it to target victims with frauds and scams.

75. Identity thieves use stolen PII for a variety of crimes, including credit card fraud, phone or utilities fraud, and bank/finance fraud.

76. Theft of PHI is also gravely serious: “[a] thief may use your name or health insurance numbers to see a doctor, get prescription drugs, file claims with your insurance provider, or get other care. If the thief’s health information is mixed with yours, your treatment, insurance and payment records, and credit report may be affected.”

77. According to account monitoring company LogDog, medical data sells for \$50 and up on the Dark Web.¹³

78. Based on the foregoing, the information compromised in the Data Breach is significantly more valuable than the loss of, for example, credit card information in a retailer data breach because, there, victims can cancel or close credit and debit card accounts. The information

¹⁰ *Here’s How Much Your Personal Information Is Selling for on the Dark Web*, Experian, Dec. 6, 2017, available at: <https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/heres-how-much-yourpersonal-information-is-selling-for-on-the-dark-web/> (last visited Oct. 17, 2022).

¹¹ *In the Dark*, VPNOverview, 2019, available at: <https://vpnoverview.com/privacy/anonymusbrowsing/in-the-dark/> (last visited Oct. 217, 2022).

¹² See Ashiq Ja, *Hackers Selling Healthcare Data in the Black Market*, InfoSec (July 27, 2015), <https://resources.infosecinstitute.com/topic/hackers-selling-healthcare-data-in-the-black-market/> (last visited May 7, 2023).

¹³ Lisa Vaas, *Ransomware Attacks Paralyze, and Sometimes Crush, Hospitals*, Naked Security (Oct. 3, 2019), <https://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2019/10/03/ransomware-attacks-paralyze-and-sometimes-crush-hospitals/#content> (last accessed July 20, 2021)

compromised in this Data Breach is impossible to “close” and difficult, if not impossible, to Ascension.

79. This data demands a much higher price on the black market. Martin Walter, senior director at cybersecurity firm RedSeal, explained, “Compared to credit card information, personally identifiable information . . . [is] worth more than 10x on the black market.”¹⁴

80. Among other forms of fraud, identity thieves may obtain driver’s licenses, government benefits, medical services, and housing or even give false information to police.

81. The fraudulent activity resulting from the Data Breach may not come to light for years. There may be a time lag between when harm occurs versus when it is discovered, and also between when Private Information is stolen and when it is used. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (“GAO”), which conducted a study regarding data breaches: [L]aw enforcement officials told us that in some cases, stolen data may be held for up to a year or more before being used to commit identity theft. Further, once stolen data have been sold or posted on the Web, fraudulent use of that information may continue for years. As a result, studies that attempt to measure the harm resulting from data breaches cannot necessarily rule out all future harm.¹⁵

¹⁴ Tim Greene, *Anthem Hack: Personal Data Stolen Sells for 10x Price of Stolen Credit Card Numbers*, IT World, (Feb. 6, 2015), available at: <https://www.networkworld.com/article/2880366/anthem-hack-personal-data-stolen-sells-for-10xprice-of-stolen-credit-card-numbers.html> (last visited Oct. 17, 2022).

¹⁵ *Report to Congressional Requesters*, GAO, at 29 (June 2007), available at: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-07-737.pdf> (last visited Oct. 17, 2022).

Defendant Fails To Comply With FTC Guidelines

82. The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) has promulgated numerous guides for businesses which highlight the importance of implementing reasonable data security practices. According to the FTC, the need for data security should be factored into all business decision-making.

83. In 2016, the FTC updated its publication, *Protecting Personal Information: A Guide for Business*, which established cyber-security guidelines for businesses. These guidelines note that businesses should protect the personal patient information that they keep; properly dispose of personal information that is no longer needed; encrypt information stored on computer networks; understand their network’s vulnerabilities; and implement policies to correct any security problems.¹⁶

84. The guidelines also recommend that healthcare businesses use an intrusion detection system to expose a breach as soon as it occurs; monitor all incoming traffic for activity indicating someone is attempting to hack the system; watch for large amounts of data being transmitted from the system; and have a response plan ready in the event of a breach.¹⁷

85. The FTC further recommends that healthcare companies not maintain Private Information longer than is needed for authorization of a transaction; limit access to sensitive data; require complex passwords to be used on networks; use industry-tested methods for security;

¹⁶ *Protecting Personal Information: A Guide for Business*, Federal Trade Commission (2016). Available at https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/plain-language/pdf-0136_protetingpersonal-information.pdf (last visited Oct. 17, 2022).

¹⁷ 18 *Id.*

monitor for suspicious activity on the network; and verify that thirdparty service providers have implemented reasonable security measures.

86. The FTC has brought enforcement actions against healthcare entities for failing to protect patient data adequately and reasonably, treating the failure to employ reasonable and appropriate measures to protect against unauthorized access to confidential patient data as an unfair act or practice prohibited by Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (“FTCA”), 15 U.S.C. § 45. Orders resulting from these actions further clarify the measures businesses must take to meet their data security obligations.

87. These FTC enforcement actions include actions against healthcare providers like Defendant. *See, e.g., In the Matter of LabMd, Inc., A Corp*, 2016-2 Trade Cas. (Ascension) ¶ 79708, 2016 WL 4128215, at *32 (MSNET July 28, 2016) (“[T]he Commission concludes that LabMD’s data security practices were unreasonable and constitute an unfair act or practice in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act.”).

88. Defendant failed to properly implement basic data security practices.

89. Defendant’s failure to employ reasonable and appropriate measures to protect against unauthorized access to patients’ Private Information constitutes an unfair act or practice prohibited by Section 5 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45.

90. Upon information and belief, Defendant was at all times fully aware of its obligation to protect the Private Information of its patients and its clients’ patients. Defendant was also aware of the significant repercussions that would result from its failure to do so.

Defendant Fails To Comply With HIPAA Guidelines

91. Defendant is a business associate under HIPAA (45 C.F.R. § 160.102) and is required to comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule and Security Rule, 45 C.F.R. Part 160 and Part

164, Subparts A and E (“Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information”), and Security Rule (“Security Standards for the Protection of Electronic Protected Health Information”), 45 C.F.R. Part 160 and Part 164, Subparts A and C.

92. Defendant is subject to the rules and regulations for safeguarding electronic forms of medical information pursuant to the Health Information Technology Act (“HITECH”).¹⁸ See 42 U.S.C. §17921, 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

93. HIPAA’s Privacy Rule or *Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information* establishes national standards for the protection of health information.

94. HIPAA’s Privacy Rule or *Security Standards for the Protection of Electronic Protected Health Information* establishes a national set of security standards for protecting health information that is kept or transferred in electronic form.

95. HIPAA requires “compl[iance] with the applicable standards, implementation specifications, and requirements” of HIPAA “with respect to electronic protected health information.” 45 C.F.R. § 164.302.

96. “Electronic protected health information” is “individually identifiable health information ... that is (i) transmitted by electronic media; maintained in electronic media.” 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

97. HIPAA’s Security Rule requires Defendant to do the following:

¹⁸ HIPAA and HITECH work in tandem to provide guidelines and rules for maintaining protected health information. HITECH references and incorporates HIPAA.

- a. Ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all electronic protected health information the covered entity or business associate creates, receives, maintains, or transmits;
- b. Protect against any reasonably anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity of such information;
- c. Protect against any reasonably anticipated uses or disclosures of such information that are not permitted; and
- d. Ensure compliance by its workforce.

98. HIPAA also requires Defendant to “review and modify the security measures implemented ... as needed to continue provision of reasonable and appropriate protection of electronic protected health information.” 45 C.F.R. § 164.306(e). Additionally, Defendant is required under HIPAA to “[i]mplement technical policies and procedures for electronic information systems that maintain electronic protected health information to allow access only to those persons or software programs that have been granted access rights.” 45 C.F.R. § 164.312(a)(1).

99. HIPAA and HITECH also obligated Defendant to implement policies and procedures to prevent, detect, contain, and correct security violations, and to protect against uses or disclosures of electronic protected health information that are reasonably anticipated but not permitted by the privacy rules. *See* 45 C.F.R. § 164.306(a)(1) and § 164.306(a)(3); *see also* 42 U.S.C. §17902.

100. The HIPAA Breach Notification Rule, 45 C.F.R. §§ 164.400-414, also requires Defendant to provide notice of the Data Breach to each affected individual “without unreasonable delay and *in no case later than 60 days following discovery of the breach.*”¹⁹

101. HIPAA requires a business associate to have and apply appropriate sanctions against members of its workforce who fail to comply with the privacy policies and procedures of the business associate or the requirements of 45 C.F.R. Part 164, Subparts D or E. *See* 45 C.F.R. § 164.530(e).

102. HIPAA requires a business associate to mitigate, to the extent practicable, any harmful effect that is known to the covered entity of a use or disclosure of protected health information in violation of its policies and procedures or the requirements of 45 C.F.R. Part 164, Subpart E by the covered entity or its business associate. *See* 45 C.F.R. § 164.530(f).

103. HIPAA also requires the Office of Civil Rights (“OCR”), within the Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”), to issue annual guidance documents on the provisions in the HIPAA Security Rule. *See* 45 C.F.R. §§ 164.302-164.318. For example, “HHS has developed guidance and tools to assist HIPAA covered entities in identifying and implementing the most cost effective and appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of e-PHI and comply with the risk analysis requirements of the Security Rule.” US Department of Health & Human Services, Security Rule Guidance

¹⁹ Breach Notification Rule, U.S. Dep’t of Health & Human Services, <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/breach-notification/index.html> (emphasis added).

Material.²⁰ The list of resources includes a link to guidelines set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which OCR says “represent the industry standard for good business practices with respect to standards for securing e-PHI.” US Department of Health & Human Services, Guidance on Risk Analysis.

Defendant Fails To Comply With Industry Standards

104. As noted above, experts studying cyber security routinely identify healthcare entities in possession of Private Information as being particularly vulnerable to cyberattacks because of the value of the Private Information which they collect and maintain.

105. Several best practices have been identified that, at a minimum, should be implemented by healthcare entities in possession of Private Information, like Defendant, including but not limited to: educating all employees; strong passwords; multi-layer security, including firewalls, anti-virus, and anti-malware software; encryption, making data unreadable without a key; multi-factor authentication; backup data and limiting which employees can access sensitive data. Defendant failed to follow these industry best practices, including a failure to implement multi-factor authentication.

106. Other best cybersecurity practices that are standard in the healthcare industry include installing appropriate malware detection software; monitoring and limiting the network ports; protecting web browsers and email management systems; setting up network systems such as firewalls, switches and routers; monitoring and protection of physical security systems;

²⁰ <http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/security/guidance/index.html>.

protection against any possible communication system; training staff regarding critical points. Defendant failed to follow these cybersecurity best practices, including failure to train staff.

107. Defendant failed to meet the minimum standards of any of the following frameworks: the NIST Cybersecurity Framework Version 1.1 (including without limitation PR.AC-1, PR.AC-3, PR.AC-4, PR.AC-5, PR.AC-6, PR.AC-7, PR.AT-1, PR.DS-1, PR.DS-5, PR.PT-1, PR.PT-3, DE.CM-1, DE.CM-4, DE.CM-7, DE.CM-8, and RS.CO-2), and the Center for Internet Security's Critical Security Controls (CIS CSC), which are all established standards in reasonable cybersecurity readiness.

108. These foregoing frameworks are existing and applicable industry standards in the healthcare industry, and upon information and belief, Defendant failed to comply with at least one—or all—of these accepted standards, thereby opening the door to the threat actor and causing the Data Breach.

COMMON INJURIES & DAMAGES

109. As a result of Defendant's ineffective and inadequate data security practices, the Data Breach, and the foreseeable consequences of Private Information ending up in the possession of criminals, the risk of identity theft to the Plaintiff and Class Members has materialized and is imminent, and Plaintiff and Class Members have all sustained actual injuries and damages, including: (a) invasion of privacy; (b) loss of time and loss of productivity incurred mitigating the materialized risk and imminent threat of identity theft risk; (c) the loss of benefit of the bargain (price premium damages); (d) diminution of value of their Private Information; (e) invasion of privacy; and (f) the continued risk to their Private Information, which remains in the possession of Defendant, and which is subject to further breaches, so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private

Information.

The Data Breach Increases Victims' Risk Of Identity Theft

110. Plaintiff and Class Members are at a heightened risk of identity theft for years to come.

111. The unencrypted Private Information of Class Members will end up for sale on the dark web because that is the *modus operandi* of hackers. In addition, unencrypted Private Information may fall into the hands of companies that will use the detailed Private Information for targeted marketing without the approval of Plaintiff and Class Members. Unauthorized individuals can easily access the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

112. The link between a data breach and the risk of identity theft is simple and well established. Criminals acquire and steal Private Information to monetize the information. Criminals monetize the data by selling the stolen information on the black market to other criminals who then utilize the information to commit a variety of identity theft related crimes discussed below.

113. Because a person's identity is akin to a puzzle with multiple data points, the more accurate pieces of data an identity thief obtains about a person, the easier it is for the thief to take on the victim's identity--or track the victim to attempt crimes against the individual to obtain more data to perfect a crime.

114. For example, armed with just a name and date of birth, a data thief can utilize a hacking technique referred to as "social engineering" to obtain even more information about a victim's identity, such as a person's login credentials or Social Security number. Social engineering is a form of hacking whereby a data thief uses previously acquired information to manipulate and trick individuals into disclosing additional confidential or personal information through means

such as spam phone calls and text messages or phishing emails. Data Breaches can be the starting point for these additional targeted attacks on the victim.

115. One such example of criminals piecing together bits and pieces of compromised PII for profit is the development of “Fullz” packages.²¹

116. With “Fullz” packages, cyber-criminals can cross-reference two sources of Private Information to marry unregulated data available elsewhere to criminally stolen data with an astonishingly complete scope and degree of accuracy in order to assemble complete dossiers on individuals.

117. The development of “Fullz” packages means here that the stolen Private Information from the Data Breach can easily be used to link and identify it to Plaintiffs’ and Class Members’ phone numbers, email addresses, and other unregulated sources and identifiers. In other words, even if certain information such as emails, phone numbers, or credit card numbers may not be included in the Private Information that was exfiltrated in the Data Breach, criminals may still easily create a Fullz package and sell it at a higher price to unscrupulous operators and criminals (such as illegal and scam telemarketers) over and over.

118. The existence and prevalence of “Fullz” packages means that the Private Information stolen from the data breach can easily be linked to the unregulated data (like phone numbers and emails) of Plaintiff and the other Class Members. and more. As a rule of thumb, the

²¹ “Fullz” is fraudster speak for data that includes the information of the victim, including, but not limited to, the name, address, credit card information, social security number, date of birth,

more information you have on a victim, the more money that can be made off of those credentials. Fullz are usually pricier than standard credit card credentials, commanding up to \$100 per record (or more) on the dark web. Fullz can be cashed out (turning credentials into money) in various ways, including performing bank transactions over the phone with the required authentication details in-hand. Even “dead Fullz,” which are Fullz credentials associated with credit cards that are no longer valid, can still be used for numerous purposes, including tax refund scams, ordering credit cards on behalf of the victim, or opening a “mule account” (an account that will accept a fraudulent money transfer from a compromised account) without the victim’s knowledge. *See, e.g.,* Brian Krebs, *Medical Records for Sale in Underground Stolen From Texas Life Insurance Firm*, Krebs on Security (Sep. 18, 2014), <https://krebsonsecurity.com/2014/09/medical-records-for-sale-in-underground-stolen-from-texas-life-insurance-/>(<https://krebsonsecurity.com/2014/09/medical-records-for-sale-inunderground-stolen-from-texas-life-insurance-finn/>) (last visited on May 26, 2023).

119. Thus, even if certain information (such as Social Security numbers) was not stolen in the data breach, criminals can still easily create a comprehensive “Fullz” package.

120. Then, this comprehensive dossier can be sold—and then resold in perpetuity—to crooked operators and other criminals (like illegal and scam telemarketers).

Loss Of Time To Mitigate Risk Of Identity Theft And Fraud

121. As a result of the recognized risk of identity theft, when a Data Breach occurs, and an individual is notified by a company that their Private Information was compromised, as in this Data Breach, the reasonable person is expected to take steps and spend time to address the dangerous situation, learn about the breach, and otherwise mitigate the risk of becoming a victim of identity theft or fraud. Failure to spend time taking steps to review accounts or credit reports

could expose the individual to greater financial harm – yet, the resource and asset of time has been lost.

122. Plaintiff and Class Members have spent, and will spend additional time in the future, on a variety of prudent actions, such as researching and verifying the legitimacy of the Data Breach.

123. Plaintiff’s mitigation efforts are consistent with the U.S. Government Accountability Office that released a report in 2007 regarding data breaches (“GAO Report”) in which it noted that victims of identity theft will face “substantial costs and time to repair the damage to their good name and credit record.”²²

124. Plaintiff’s mitigation efforts are also consistent with the steps that FTC recommends that data breach victims take several steps to protect their personal and financial information after a data breach, including: contacting one of the credit bureaus to place a fraud alert (consider an extended fraud alert that lasts for seven years if someone steals their identity), reviewing their credit reports, contacting companies to remove fraudulent charges from their accounts, placing a credit freeze on their credit, and correcting their credit reports.²³

125. And for those Class Members who experience actual identity theft and fraud, the United States Government Accountability Office released a report in 2007 regarding data breaches

²² See United States Government Accountability Office, GAO-07-737, Personal Information: Data Breaches Are Frequent, but Evidence of Resulting Identity Theft Is Limited; However, the Full Extent Is Unknown (June 2007), <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07737.pdf>.

²³ See Federal Trade Commission, *Identity Theft.gov*, <https://www.identitytheft.gov/Steps> (last visited July 7, 2022).

(“GAO Report”) in which it noted that victims of identity theft will face “substantial costs and time to repair the damage to their good name and credit record.”²⁴

Diminution Value Of Private Information

126. PII and PHI are valuable property rights.²⁵ Their value is axiomatic, considering the value of Big Data in corporate America and the consequences of cyber thefts include heavy prison sentences. Even this obvious risk to reward analysis illustrates beyond doubt that Private Information has considerable market value.

127. An active and robust legitimate marketplace for Private Information exists. In 2019, the data brokering industry was worth roughly \$200 billion.²⁶

128. In fact, the data marketplace is so sophisticated that consumers can actually sell their non-public information directly to a data broker who in turn aggregates the information and provides it to marketers or app developers.^{27,28}

²⁴ See “Data Breaches Are Frequent, but Evidence of Resulting Identity Theft Is Limited; However, the Full Extent Is Unknown,” p. 2, U.S. Government Accountability Office, June 2007, <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07737.pdf> (last visited Sep. 13, 2022) (“GAO Report”).

²⁵ See, e.g., Randall T. Soma, et al, Corporate Privacy Trend: The “Value” of Personally Identifiable Information (“Private Information”) Equals the “Value” of Financial Assets, 15 Rich. J.L. & Tech. 11, at *3-4 (2009) (“Private Information, which companies obtain at little cost, has quantifiable value that is rapidly reaching a level comparable to the value of traditional

²⁶ <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2019-11-05/column-data-brokers>

²⁷ <https://datacoup.com/>

²⁸ <https://digi.me/what-is-digime/>

129. Consumers who agree to provide their web browsing history to the Nielsen Corporation can receive up to \$50.00 a year.²⁹

130. Conversely sensitive PII can sell for as much as \$363 per record on the dark web according to the Infosec Institute.³⁰

131. As a result of the Data Breach, Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information, which has an inherent market value in both legitimate and dark markets, has been damaged and diminished by its compromise and unauthorized release. However, this transfer of value occurred without any consideration paid to Plaintiff or Class Members for their property, resulting in an economic loss. Moreover, the Private Information is financial assets.") (citations omitted) now readily available, and the rarity of the Data has been lost, thereby causing additional loss of value.

132. Based on the foregoing, the information compromised in the Data Breach is significantly more valuable than the loss of, for example, credit card information in a retailer data breach because, there, victims can cancel or close credit and debit card accounts. The information compromised in this Data Breach is impossible to "close" and difficult, if not impossible, to Ascension.

²⁹ Nielsen Computer & Mobile Panel, Frequently Asked Questions, available at <https://computermobilepanel.nielsen.com/ui/US/en/faqs.html>

³⁰ See Ashiq Ja, *Hackers Selling Healthcare Data in the Black Market*, InfoSec (July 27, 2015), <https://resources.infosecinstitute.com/topic/hackers-selling-healthcare-data-in-the-black-market/> (last visited Sep. 13, 2022).

133. Among other forms of fraud, identity thieves may obtain driver's licenses, government benefits, medical services, and housing or even give false information to police.

134. The fraudulent activity resulting from the Data Breach may not come to light for years.

135. At all relevant times, Defendant knew, or reasonably should have known, of the importance of safeguarding the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members, and of the foreseeable consequences that would occur if Defendant's data security system was breached, including, specifically, the significant costs that would be imposed on Plaintiff and Class Members as a result of a breach.

136. The injuries to Plaintiff and Class Members were directly and proximately caused by Defendant's failure to implement or maintain adequate data security measures for the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

Future Cost of Credit and Identity Theft Monitoring is Reasonable and Necessary

137. Given the type of targeted attack in this case and sophisticated criminal activity, the type of Private Information involved, and the volume of data obtained in the Data Breach, there is a strong probability that entire batches of stolen information have been placed, or will be placed, on the black market/dark web for sale and purchase by criminals intending to utilize the Private Information for identity theft crimes –e.g., opening bank accounts in the victims' names to make purchases or to launder money; file false tax returns; take out loans or lines of credit; or file false unemployment claims.

138. Such fraud may go undetected until debt collection calls commence months, or even years, later. An individual may not know that his or her personal information was used to file for unemployment benefits until law enforcement notifies the individual's employer of the suspected

fraud. Fraudulent tax returns are typically discovered only when an individual's authentic tax return is rejected.

139. Consequently, Plaintiff and Class Members are at a present and continuous risk of fraud and identity theft for many years into the future.

140. The retail cost of credit monitoring and identity theft monitoring can cost around \$200 a year per Class Member. This is a reasonable and necessary cost to monitor to protect Class Members from the risk of identity theft that arose from Defendant's Data Breach. This is a future cost for a minimum of five years that Plaintiff and Class Members would not need to bear but for Defendant's failure to safeguard their Private Information.

Loss Of The Benefit Of The Bargain

141. Furthermore, Defendant's poor data security deprived Plaintiff and Class Members the benefit of their bargain. When agreeing to pay Defendant and/or its clients for the provision of medical services, Plaintiff and other reasonable consumers understood and expected that they were, in part, paying for the service and necessary data security to protect the Private Information, when in fact, Defendant did not provide the expected data security. Accordingly, Plaintiff and Class Members received services that were of a lesser value than what they reasonably expected to receive under the bargains they struck with Defendant and/or its clients.

PLAINTIFF NEGRON'S EXPERIENCE

142. Plaintiff Katherine Negron has utilized the medical services of Ascension Saint Mary – Chicago, Defendant facility, located at 2233 W. Division St, Chicago, IL 60622 for the past sixteen years through the present.

143. Plaintiff, Katherine Negron has been a client of Plaintiff's counsel for the past five years.

144. Plaintiff Katherine Negron's son, Angel Negron, who is also a member of the Class has utilized the medical services of Ascension Saint Mary – Chicago for the past year.

145. In order to obtain medical services from Ascension Saint Mary, Plaintiff Negron and her son Angel Negron were required to provide Personal Information, directly or indirectly, to Defendant. The patient records, covering the Negrons' medical care from Defendant are electronically stored that were subject to the cybersecurity attack.

146. Upon information and belief, at the time of the Data Breach, Defendant retained Plaintiff's Private Information in its system.

147. Plaintiff Negron is very careful about sharing her sensitive Private Information. Plaintiff stores any documents containing his Private Information in a safe and secure location. She has never knowingly transmitted unencrypted sensitive Private Information over the internet or any other unsecured source. Plaintiff would not have entrusted her Private Information to Defendant had she known of Defendant's lax data security policies.

148. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff's PII and/or PHI was improperly accessed and obtained by unauthorized third parties in the Data Breach.

149. Plaintiff suffered actual injury from having her Private Information compromised as a result of the Data Breach including, but not limited to: (i) invasion of privacy; (ii) theft of her Private Information; (iii) lost or diminished value of Private Information; (iv) lost time and opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (v) loss of benefit of the bargain; (vi) lost opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (vii) statutory damages; (viii) nominal damages; and (ix) the continued and certainly increased risk to his Private Information, which: (a) remains unencrypted and available for unauthorized third parties to access and abuse; and (b)

remains backed up in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information.

150. The Data Breach has caused Plaintiff to suffer fear, anxiety, and stress, which has been compounded by the fact that Defendant has still not fully informed her of key details about the Data Breach's occurrence.

151. As a result of the Data Breach, Plaintiff anticipates spending considerable time and money on an ongoing basis to try to mitigate and address harms caused by the Data Breach.

152. As a result of the Data Breach, Plaintiff is at a present risk and will continue to be at increased risk of identity theft and fraud for years to come.

153. Plaintiff Negron has a continuing interest in ensuring that his Private Information, which, upon information and belief, remains backed up in Defendant's possession, is protected and safeguarded from future breaches.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

154. Plaintiff brings this action individually and on behalf of all other persons similarly situated, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a), 23(b)(1), 23(b)(2), and 23(b)(3).

155. Specifically, Plaintiff proposes the following class definitions, subject to amendment as appropriate:

Nationwide Class

All persons in the United States whose Private Information was compromised as a result of the Data Breach reported by Defendant (the "Class").

Illinois Subclass

All persons in the State of Illinois whose Private Information was compromised as a result of the Data Breach reported by Defendant (the "Illinois Subclass").

156. Excluded from the Classes are Defendant and its parents or subsidiaries, any entities in which it has a controlling interest, as well as its officers, directors, affiliates, legal representatives, heirs, predecessors, successors, and assigns. Also excluded is any Judge to whom this case is assigned as well as their judicial staff and immediate family members.

157. Plaintiff reserves the right to modify or amend the definition of the proposed Classes, as well as add subclasses, before the Court determines whether certification is appropriate.

158. The proposed Class meets the criteria for certification under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a), (b)(2), and (b)(3).

159. Numerosity. The Class Members are so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable. Although the precise number of such persons is unknown to Plaintiff and exclusively in the possession of Defendant, upon information and belief, thousands of individuals were impacted in the Data Breach.

160. Commonality. There are questions of law and fact common to the Class which predominate over any questions affecting only individual Class Members. These common questions of law and fact include, without limitation:

- a. Whether Defendant engaged in the conduct alleged herein;
- b. Whether Defendant's conduct violated the FTCA and/or HIPAA;
- c. When Defendant learned of the Data Breach;
- d. Whether Defendant's response to the Data Breach was adequate;
- e. Whether Defendant unlawfully lost or disclosed Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information;
- f. Whether Defendant failed to implement and maintain reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature and scope of the Private Information compromised in the Data Breach;

- g. Whether Defendant's data security systems prior to and during the Data Breach complied with applicable data security laws and regulations;
- h. Whether Defendant's data security systems prior to and during the Data Breach were consistent with industry standards;
- i. Whether Defendant owed a duty to Class Members to safeguard their Private Information;
- j. Whether Defendant breached its duty to Class Members to safeguard their Private Information;
- k. Whether hackers obtained Class Members' Private Information via the Data Breach;
- l. Whether Defendant had a legal duty to provide timely and accurate notice of the Data Breach to Plaintiff and the Class Members;
- m. Whether Defendant breached its duty to provide timely and accurate notice of the Data Breach to Plaintiff and Class Members;
- n. Whether Defendant knew or should have known that its data security systems and monitoring processes were deficient;
- o. What damages Plaintiff and Class Members suffered as a result of Defendant's misconduct;
- p. Whether Defendant's conduct was negligent;
- q. Whether Defendant was unjustly enriched;
- r. Whether Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to actual and/or statutory damages;
- s. Whether Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to additional credit or identity monitoring and monetary relief; and
- t. Whether Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to equitable relief, including injunctive relief, restitution, disgorgement, and/or the establishment of a constructive trust.

161. Typicality. Plaintiff's claims are typical of those of other Class Members because Plaintiff's Private Information, like that of every other Class Member, was compromised in the Data Breach. Plaintiff's claims are typical of those of the other Class Members because, inter alia,

all Class Members were injured through the common misconduct of Defendant. Plaintiff is advancing the same claims and legal theories on behalf of herself and all other Class Members, and there are no defenses that are unique to Plaintiff. The claims of Plaintiff and those of Class Members arise from the same operative facts and are based on the same legal theories.

162. Adequacy of Representation. Plaintiff will adequately represent and protect the interests of Class Members. Plaintiff's counsel is currently litigating a similar data breach with another health care facility in Chicago. The case is on-going with the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division. Plaintiff's counsel intends to enlist the support of other law firms to bring added experience in litigating data privacy in class actions.

163. Predominance. Defendant has engaged in a common course of conduct toward Plaintiff and Class Members in that all of Plaintiff's and Class Members' data was stored on the same computer systems and unlawfully accessed and exfiltrated in the same way. The common issues arising from Defendant's conduct affecting Class Members set out above predominate over any individualized issues. Adjudication of these common issues in a single action has important and desirable advantages of judicial economy.

164. Superiority. A Class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy and no unusual difficulties are likely to be encountered in the management of this class action. Class treatment of common questions of law and fact is superior to multiple individual actions or piecemeal litigation. Absent a Class action, most Class Members would likely find that the cost of litigating their individual claims is prohibitively high and would therefore have no effective remedy. The prosecution of separate actions by individual Class Members would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to individual Class Members, which would establish incompatible standards of conduct for

Defendant. In contrast, conducting this action as a class action presents far fewer management difficulties, conserves judicial resources and the parties' resources, and protects the rights of each Class Member.

165. Class certification is also appropriate under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(2). Defendant has acted and/or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the Class such that final injunctive relief and/or corresponding declaratory relief is appropriate as to the Class as a whole.

166. Finally, all members of the proposed Class are readily ascertainable. Defendant has access to the names and addresses and/or email addresses of Class Members affected by the Data Breach. Class Members have already been preliminarily identified and sent Notice of the Data Breach by Defendant.

COUNT I
Negligence
(On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

167. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every factual allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 166.

168. Defendant requires its patients and its clients' patients, including Plaintiff and Class Members, to submit non-public Private Information in the ordinary course of providing its services.

169. Defendant gathered and stored the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members as part of its business of soliciting its services to its patients and its clients, which solicitations and services affect commerce.

170. Plaintiff and Class Members entrusted Defendant with their Private Information with the understanding that Defendant would safeguard their information.

171. Defendant had full knowledge of the sensitivity of the Private Information and the types of harm that Plaintiff and Class Members could and would suffer if the Private Information were wrongfully disclosed.

172. By assuming the responsibility to collect and store this data, and in fact doing so, and sharing it and using it for commercial gain, Defendant had a duty of care to use reasonable means to secure and safeguard their computer property—and Class Members' Private Information held within it—to prevent disclosure of the information, and to safeguard the information from theft. Defendant's duty included a responsibility to implement processes by which they could detect a breach of its security systems in a reasonably expeditious period of time and to give prompt notice to those affected in the case of a data breach.

173. Defendant has a duty to employ reasonable security measures under Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45, which prohibits "unfair . . . practices in or affecting commerce," including, as interpreted and enforced by the FTC, the unfair practice of failing to use reasonable measures to protect confidential data.

174. Defendant's duty to use reasonable security measures under HIPAA required Defendant to "reasonably protect" confidential data from "any intentional or unintentional use or disclosure" and to "have in place appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the privacy of protected health information." 45 C.F.R. § 164.530(c)(1). Some or all of the healthcare and/or medical information at issue in this case constitutes "protected health information" within the meaning of HIPAA.

175. Defendant owed a duty of care to Plaintiff and Class Members to provide data security consistent with industry standards and other requirements discussed herein, and to ensure

that its systems and networks, and the personnel responsible for them, adequately protected the Private Information.

176. Defendant's duty of care to use reasonable security measures arose as a result of the special relationship that existed between Defendant and its patients. That special relationship arose because Plaintiff and the Class entrusted Defendant with their confidential Private Information, a necessary part of being patients of Defendant and/or Defendant's clients.

177. Defendant's duty to use reasonable care in protecting confidential data arose not only as a result of the statutes and regulations described above, but also because Defendant is bound by industry standards to protect confidential Private Information.

178. Defendant was subject to an "independent duty," untethered to any contract between Defendant and Plaintiff or the Class.

179. Defendant also had a duty to exercise appropriate clearinghouse practices to remove former patients' Private Information it was no longer required to retain pursuant to regulations.

180. Moreover, Defendant has a duty to promptly and adequately notify Plaintiff and the Class of the Data Breach.

181. Defendant has and continues to have a duty to adequately disclose that the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class within Defendant's possession might have been compromised, how it was compromised, and precisely the types of data that were compromised and when. Such notice is necessary to allow Plaintiff and the Class to take steps to prevent, mitigate, and repair any identity theft and the fraudulent use of their Private Information by third parties.

182. Defendant breached its duties, pursuant to the FTC Act, HIPAA, and other applicable standards, and thus were negligent, by failing to use reasonable measures to protect

Class Members' Private Information. The specific negligent acts and omissions committed by Defendant include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Failing to adopt, implement, and maintain adequate security measures to safeguard Class Members' Private Information;
- b. Failing to adequately monitor the security of their networks and systems;
- c. Failure to periodically ensure that their email system had plans in place to maintain reasonable data security safeguards;
- d. Allowing unauthorized access to Class Members' Private Information;
- e. Failing to detect in a timely manner that Class Members' Private Information had been compromised;
- f. Failing to timely and adequately notify Class Members about the Data Breach's occurrence and scope, so that they could take appropriate steps to mitigate the potential for identity theft and other damages; and

183. Defendant violated Section 5 of the FTC Act and HIPAA by failing to use reasonable measures to protect Private Information and not complying with applicable industry standards, as described in detail herein. Defendant's conduct was particularly unreasonable given the nature and amount of Private Information it obtained and stored and the foreseeable consequences of the immense damages that would result to Plaintiff and the Class.

184. Plaintiff and the Class are within the class of persons that the FTC Act and HIPAA were intended to protect.

185. The harm that occurred as a result of the Data Breach is the type of harm the FTC Act and HIPAA were intended to guard against.

186. Defendant's violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act and HIPAA constitutes negligence.

187. The FTC has pursued enforcement actions against businesses, which, as a result of their failure to employ reasonable data security measures and avoid unfair and deceptive practices, caused the same harm as that suffered by Plaintiff and the Class.

188. A breach of security, unauthorized access, and resulting injury to Plaintiff and the Class was reasonably foreseeable, particularly in light of Defendant's inadequate security practices.

189. It was foreseeable that Defendant's failure to use reasonable measures to protect Class Members' Private Information would result in injury to Class Members. Further, the breach of security was reasonably foreseeable given the known high frequency of cyberattacks and data breaches in the healthcare industry.

190. Defendant has full knowledge of the sensitivity of the Private Information and the types of harm that Plaintiff and the Class could and would suffer if the Private Information were wrongfully disclosed.

191. Plaintiff and the Class were the foreseeable and probable victims of any inadequate security practices and procedures. Defendant knew or should have known of the inherent risks in collecting and storing the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class, the critical importance of providing adequate security of that Private Information, and the necessity for encrypting Private Information stored on Defendant's systems.

192. It was therefore foreseeable that the failure to adequately safeguard Class Members' Private Information would result in one or more types of injuries to Class Members.

193. Plaintiff and the Class have no ability to protect their Private Information that was in, and possibly remains in, Defendant's possession.

194. Defendant was in a position to protect against the harm suffered by Plaintiff and the Class as a result of the Data Breach.

195. Defendant's duty extended to protecting Plaintiff and the Class from the risk of foreseeable criminal conduct of third parties, which has been recognized in situations where the actor's own conduct or misconduct exposes another to the risk or defeats protections put in place to guard against the risk, or where the parties are in a special relationship. *See* Restatement (Second) of Torts § 302B. Numerous courts and legislatures have also recognized the existence of a specific duty to reasonably safeguard personal information.

196. Defendant has admitted that the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class was wrongfully lost and disclosed to unauthorized third persons as a result of the Data Breach.

197. But for Defendant's wrongful and negligent breach of duties owed to Plaintiff and the Class, the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class would not have been compromised.

198. There is a close causal connection between Defendant's failure to implement security measures to protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class and the harm, or risk of imminent harm, suffered by Plaintiff and the Class. The Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class was lost and accessed as the proximate result of Defendant's failure to exercise reasonable care in safeguarding such Private Information by adopting, implementing, and maintaining appropriate security measures.

199. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence, Plaintiff and the Class have suffered and will suffer injury, including but not limited to: (i) invasion of privacy; (ii) theft of their Private Information; (iii) lost or diminished value of Private Information; (iv) lost time and opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (v) loss of benefit of the bargain; (vi) lost opportunity costs associated with attempting to

mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (vii) statutory damages; (viii) nominal damages; and (ix) the continued and certainly increased risk to their Private Information, which: (a) remains unencrypted and available for unauthorized third parties to access and abuse; and (b) remains backed up in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information.

200. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence, Plaintiff and the Class have suffered and will continue to suffer other forms of injury and/or harm, including, but not limited to, anxiety, emotional distress, loss of privacy, and other economic and non-economic losses.

201. Additionally, as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence, Plaintiff and the Class have suffered and will suffer the continued risks of exposure of their Private Information, which remain in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information in its continued possession.

202. Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to compensatory and consequential damages suffered as a result of the Data Breach.

203. Defendant's negligent conduct is ongoing, in that it still holds the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members in an unsafe and insecure manner.

204. Plaintiff and Class Members are also entitled to injunctive relief requiring Defendant to (i) strengthen its data security systems and monitoring procedures; (ii) submit to future annual audits of those systems and monitoring procedures; and (iii) continue to provide adequate credit monitoring to all Class Members.

COUNT II
Negligence *Per Se*
(On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

205. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every factual allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 166.

206. Section 5 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45, prohibits “unfair . . . practices in or affecting commerce” including, as interpreted and enforced by the FTC, the unfair act or practice by Defendant of failing to use reasonable measures to protect Private Information. Various FTC publications and orders also form the basis of Defendant’s duty.

207. Defendant violated Section 5 of the FTC Act (and similar state statutes) by failing to use reasonable measures to protect Private Information and not complying with industry standards. Defendant’s conduct was particularly unreasonable given the nature and amount of Private Information obtained and stored and the foreseeable consequences of a data breach on Defendant’s systems.

208. Defendant's duty to use reasonable security measures under HIPAA required Defendant to "reasonably protect" confidential data from "any intentional or unintentional use or disclosure" and to "have in place appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the privacy of protected health information." 45 C.F.R. § 164.530(c)(1). Some or all of the healthcare and/or medical information at issue in this case constitutes "protected health information" within the meaning of HIPAA.

209. Defendant violated HIPAA (and similar state statutes) by failing to use reasonable measures to protect Private Information and not complying with industry standards.

210. Defendant’s violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act and HIPAA (and similar state statutes) constitutes negligence *per se*.

211. Class members are consumers within the class of persons Section 5 of the FTC Act and HIPAA (and similar state statutes) were intended to protect.

212. Moreover, the harm that has occurred is the type of harm the FTC Act and HIPAA (and similar state statutes) were intended to guard against. Indeed, the FTC has pursued over fifty enforcement actions against businesses which, as a result of their failure to employ reasonable data security measures and avoid unfair and deceptive practices, caused the same harm suffered by Plaintiff and Class Members.

213. But for Defendant's wrongful and negligent breach of duties owed to Plaintiff and the Class, the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class would not have been compromised.

214. There is a close causal connection between Defendant's failure to implement security measures to protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class and the harm, or risk of imminent harm, suffered by Plaintiff and the Class. The Private Information of Plaintiff and the Class was lost and accessed as the proximate result of Defendant's failure to exercise reasonable care in safeguarding such Private Information Case implementing, and maintaining appropriate security measures.

215. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence per se, Plaintiff and the Class have suffered and will suffer injury, including but not limited to: (i) invasion of privacy; (ii) theft of their Private Information; (iii) lost or diminished value of Private Information; (iv) lost time and opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (v) loss of benefit of the bargain; (vi) lost opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (vii) statutory damages; (viii) nominal damages; and (ix) the continued and certainly increased risk to their Private Information, which: (a) remains unencrypted and available for unauthorized third parties to access and abuse;

and (b) remains backed up in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information.

216. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence per se, Plaintiff and the Class have suffered and will continue to suffer other forms of injury and/or harm, including, but not limited to, anxiety, emotional distress, loss of privacy, and other economic and non-economic losses.

217. Additionally, as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence per se, Plaintiff and the Class have suffered and will suffer the continued risks of exposure of their Private Information, which remain in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information in its continued possession.

218. Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to compensatory and consequential damages suffered as a result of the Data Breach.

219. Defendant's negligent conduct is ongoing, in that it still holds the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members in an unsafe and insecure manner.

220. Plaintiff and Class Members are also entitled to injunctive relief requiring Defendant to (i) strengthen its data security systems and monitoring procedures; (ii) submit to future annual audits of those systems and monitoring procedures; and (iii) continue to provide adequate credit monitoring to all Class Members.

COUNT III
Breach Of Implied Contract
(On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

221. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every factual allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 166.

222. Plaintiff and Class Members were required to provide their Private Information to Defendant as a condition of receiving services from Defendant and/or its clients.

223. Plaintiff and the Class entrusted their Private Information to Defendant. In so doing, Plaintiff and the Class entered into implied contracts with Defendant by which Defendant agreed to safeguard and protect such information, to keep such information secure and confidential, and to timely and accurately notify Plaintiff and the Class if their data had been breached and compromised or stolen.

224. Implicit in the agreement between Plaintiff and Class Members and the Defendant to provide Private Information, was the latter's obligation to: (a) use such Private Information for business purposes only, (b) take reasonable steps to safeguard that Private Information, (c) prevent unauthorized disclosures of the Private Information, (d) provide Plaintiff and Class Members with prompt and sufficient notice of any and all unauthorized access and/or theft of their Private Information, (e) reasonably safeguard and protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members from unauthorized disclosure or uses, (f) retain the Private Information only under conditions that kept such information secure and confidential.

225. The mutual understanding and intent of Plaintiff and Class Members on the one hand, and Defendant, on the other, is demonstrated by their conduct and course of dealing.

226. Defendant solicited, offered, and invited Plaintiff and Class Members to provide their Private Information as part of Defendant's regular business practices. Plaintiff and Class Members accepted Defendant's offers and provided their Private Information to Defendant.

227. In accepting the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members, Defendant understood and agreed that it was required to reasonably safeguard the Private Information from unauthorized access or disclosure.

228. On information and belief, at all relevant times Defendant promulgated, adopted, and implemented written privacy policies whereby it expressly promised Plaintiff and Class Members that it would only disclose Private Information under certain circumstances, none of which relate to the Data Breach.

229. On information and belief, Defendant further promised to comply with industry standards and to make sure that Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information would remain protected.

230. In entering into such implied contracts, Plaintiff and Class Members reasonably believed and expected that Defendant's data security practices complied with relevant laws and regulations and were consistent with industry standards.

231. Plaintiff and Class Members paid money to Defendant with the reasonable belief and expectation that Defendant would use part of its earnings to obtain adequate data security. Defendant failed to do so.

232. Plaintiff and Class Members would not have entrusted their Private Information to Defendant in the absence of the implied contract between them and Defendant to keep their information reasonably secure.

233. Plaintiff and Class Members would not have entrusted their Private Information to Defendant in the absence of their implied promise to monitor their computer systems and networks to ensure that it adopted reasonable data security measures.

234. Plaintiff and Class Members fully and adequately performed their obligations under the implied contracts with Defendant.

235. Defendant breached the implied contracts it made with Plaintiff and the Class by failing to safeguard and protect their personal information, by failing to delete the information of Plaintiff and the Class once the relationship ended, and by failing to provide accurate notice to them that personal information was compromised as a result of the Data Breach.

236. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's breach of the implied contracts, Plaintiff and Class Members sustained damages, as alleged herein, including the loss of the benefit of the bargain.

237. Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to compensatory, consequential, and nominal damages suffered as a result of the Data Breach.

238. Plaintiff and Class Members are also entitled to injunctive relief requiring Defendant to, *e.g.*, (i) strengthen its data security systems and monitoring procedures; (ii) submit to future annual audits of those systems and monitoring procedures; and (iii) immediately provide adequate credit monitoring to all Class Members.

COUNT IV

In the Alternative - Unjust Enrichment (On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

239. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every factual allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 166.

240. This count is pleaded in the alternative to Plaintiff's breach of implied contract claim above (Count III).

241. Plaintiff and Class Members conferred a monetary benefit on Defendant. Specifically, they paid for services from Defendant and/or its clients and in so doing also provided Defendant with their Private Information. In exchange, Plaintiff and Class Members should have received from Defendant the services that were the subject of the transaction and should have had their Private Information protected with adequate data security.

242. Defendant knew that Plaintiff and Class Members conferred a benefit on it in the form their Private Information as well as payments made on their behalf as a necessary part of their receiving services. Defendant appreciated and accepted that benefit. Defendant profited from these transactions and used the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members for business purposes.

243. Upon information and belief, Defendant funds its data security measures entirely from its general revenue, including payments on behalf of or for the benefit of Plaintiff and Class Members.

244. As such, a portion of the payments made for the benefit of or on behalf of Plaintiff and Class Members is to be used to provide a reasonable level of data security, and the amount of the portion of each payment made that is allocated to data security is known to Defendant.

245. Defendant, however, failed to secure Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information and, therefore, did not provide adequate data security in return for the benefit Plaintiff and Class Members provided.

246. Defendant would not be able to carry out an essential function of its regular business without the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members and derived revenue by

using it for business purposes. Plaintiff and Class Members expected that Defendant or anyone in Defendant's position would use a portion of that revenue to fund adequate data security practices.

247. Defendant acquired the Private Information through inequitable means in that it failed to disclose the inadequate security practices previously alleged.

248. If Plaintiff and Class Members knew that Defendant had not reasonably secured their Private Information, they would not have allowed their Private Information to be provided to Defendant.

249. Defendant enriched itself by saving the costs it reasonably should have expended on data security measures to secure Plaintiff's and Class Members' Personal Information. Instead of providing a reasonable level of security that would have prevented the hacking incident, Defendant instead calculated to increase its own profit at the expense of Plaintiff and Class Members by utilizing cheaper, ineffective security measures and diverting those funds to its own profit. Plaintiff and Class Members, on the other hand, suffered as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's decision to prioritize its own profits over the requisite security and the safety of their Private Information.

250. Under the principles of equity and good conscience, Defendant should not be permitted to retain the money wrongfully obtained Plaintiff and Class Members, because Defendant failed to implement appropriate data management and security measures that are mandated by industry standards.

251. Plaintiff and Class Members have no adequate remedy at law.

252. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and Class Members have suffered and will suffer injury, including but not limited to: (i) invasion of privacy; (ii) theft of their Private Information; (iii) lost or diminished value of Private Information; (iv) lost

time and opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (v) loss of benefit of the bargain; (vi) lost opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (vii) statutory damages; (viii) nominal damages; and (ix) the continued and certainly increased risk to their Private Information, which: (a) remains unencrypted and available for unauthorized third parties to access and abuse; and (b) remains backed up in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information.

253. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and Class Members have suffered and will continue to suffer other forms of injury and/or harm.

254. Defendant should be compelled to disgorge into a common fund or constructive trust, for the benefit of Plaintiff and Class Members, proceeds that they unjustly received from them. In the alternative, Defendant should be compelled to refund the amounts that Plaintiff and Class Members overpaid for Defendant's services.

COUNT V

**Violations of The Illinois Consumer Fraud And Deceptive Business Practices Act,
815 ILCS 505/2, *et seq.*
(On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Illinois Subclass)**

255. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every factual allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 166 and brings his claim on behalf of herself and the Illinois Subclass (the "Class" for the purposes of this count).

256. Defendant offered and continues to offer healthcare or other related services in the State of Illinois.

257. Plaintiffs and Class Members purchased, sought, and/or received healthcare or other services from Defendant for personal, family, or household purposes.

258. Defendant engaged in unlawful and unfair practices in violation of the ICFA by failing to, or contracting with companies that failed to, implement and maintain reasonable security measures to protect and secure Plaintiffs' and Class Members' Private Information in a manner that complied with applicable laws, regulations, and industry standards.

259. Defendant makes explicit statements to its prospective, current, and former patients that their Private Information will remain private.

260. Defendant's duties also arise from the Illinois Personal Information Protection Act, 815 ILCS 530/45(a) which requires: "A data collector that owns or licenses or maintains or stores but does not own or license, records that contain personal information concerning an Illinois resident shall implement and maintain reasonable security measures to protect those records from unauthorized access, acquisition, destruction, use, modification, or disclosure."

261. Defendant violated this duty by failing to, or contracting with companies that failed to, implement reasonably secure data security policies.

262. As of the date of filing this Complaint, Defendant has not notified Plaintiffs of the Data Breach. The Illinois Personal Information Protection Act requires entities that experience a cybersecurity breach to notify Illinois residents "in the most expedient time possible and without unreasonable delay." 815 ILCS 530/10. Violation of the Illinois Personal Information Protection Act constitutes an unlawful practice under the ICFA. 815 ILCS 530/20.

263. Due to the Data Breach, Plaintiffs and Class Members have lost property in the form of their PII and PHI. This breach will force Plaintiffs and Class Members to spend time or money to protect against identity theft. Plaintiffs and Class Members are now at a higher risk of

medical identity theft and other crimes for the remainder of their lifetimes. This harm sufficiently outweighs any justifications or motives for Defendant's practice of collecting and storing Private Information without appropriate and reasonable safeguards to protect such information.

264. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and Class members have been harmed and have suffered damages including, but not limited to: (i) invasion of privacy; (ii) theft of their Private Information; (iii) lost or diminished value of Private Information; (iv) lost time and opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (v) loss of benefit of the bargain; (vi) lost opportunity costs associated with attempting to mitigate the actual consequences of the Data Breach; (vii) statutory damages; (viii) nominal damages; and (ix) the continued and certainly increased risk to their Private Information, which: (a) remains unencrypted and available for unauthorized third parties to access and abuse; and (b) remains backed up in Defendant's possession and is subject to further unauthorized disclosures so long as Defendant fails to undertake appropriate and adequate measures to protect the Private Information.

265. As a direct and proximate result of the unconscionable, unfair, and deceptive acts or practices alleged herein, Plaintiff and Class members have been damaged and are entitled to recover an order providing declaratory and injunctive relief and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, to the extent permitted by law.

266. Also as a direct result of Defendant's knowing violation of the Illinois Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practices Act, Plaintiff and Class members are entitled to injunctive relief, including, but not limited to:

- a. Ordering that Defendant implement measures that ensure that the Private Information of Defendant's patients and clients' patients is

appropriately encrypted and safeguarded when stored on Defendant's network or systems;

b. Ordering that Defendant purge, delete, and destroy in a reasonable secure manner Private Information not necessary for their provision of services;

c. Ordering that Defendant routinely and continually conduct internal training and education to inform internal security personnel how to identify and contain a breach when it occurs and what to do in response to a breach; and

d. Ordering Defendant to meaningfully educate its's current and former patients about the threats they face as a result of the accessibility of their Private Information to third parties, as well as the steps Defendant's patients and clients' patients must take to protect themselves.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

- A. For an Order certifying this action as a class action and appointing Plaintiff and his counsel to represent the Class and Illinois Subclass;
- B. For equitable relief enjoining Defendant from engaging in the wrongful conduct complained of herein pertaining to the misuse and/or disclosure of Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information, and from refusing to issue prompt, complete and accurate disclosures to Plaintiff and Class Members;
- C. For equitable relief compelling Defendant to utilize appropriate methods and policies with respect to patient data collection, storage, and safety, and to disclose

with specificity the type of Private Information compromised during the Data Breach;

- D. For injunctive relief requested by Plaintiff, including but not limited to, injunctive and other equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and Class Members, including but not limited to an order:
- i. Prohibiting Defendant from engaging in the wrongful and unlawful acts described herein;
 - ii. Requiring Defendant to protect, including through encryption, all data collected through the course of its business in accordance with all applicable regulations, industry standards, and federal, state, or local laws;
 - iii. Requiring Defendant to delete, destroy, and purge the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members unless Defendant can provide to the Court reasonable justification for the retention and use of such information when weighed against the privacy interests of Plaintiff and Class Members;
 - iv. Requiring Defendant to implement and maintain a comprehensive Information Security Program designed to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members;
 - v. Prohibiting Defendant from maintaining the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members on a cloud-based database;
 - vi. Requiring Defendant to engage independent third-party security auditors/penetration testers as well as internal security personnel to conduct testing, including simulated attacks, penetration tests, and audits on Defendant's

- systems on a periodic basis, and ordering Defendant to promptly correct any problems or issues detected by such third-party security auditors;
- vii. Requiring Defendant to engage independent third-party security auditors and internal personnel to run automated security monitoring;
- viii. Requiring Defendant to audit, test, and train its security personnel regarding any new or modified procedures;
- ix. Requiring Defendant to segment data by, among other things, creating firewalls and access controls so that if one area of Defendant's network is compromised, hackers cannot gain access to other portions of Defendant's systems;
- x. Requiring Defendant to conduct regular database scanning and securing checks;
- xi. Requiring Defendant to establish an information security training program that includes at least annual information security training for all patients, with additional training to be provided as appropriate based upon the patients' respective responsibilities with handling personal identifying information, as well as protecting the personal identifying information of Plaintiff and Class Members;
- xii. Requiring Defendant to routinely and continually conduct internal training and education, and on an annual basis to inform internal security personnel how to identify and contain a breach when it occurs and what to do in response to a breach;
- xiii. Requiring Defendant to implement a system of tests to assess its respective patients' knowledge of the education programs discussed in the preceding subparagraphs, as well as randomly and periodically testing patients' compliance

with Defendant's policies, programs, and systems for protecting personal identifying information;

xiv. Requiring Defendant to implement, maintain, regularly review, and revise as necessary a threat management program designed to appropriately monitor Defendant's information networks for threats, both internal and external, and assess whether monitoring tools are appropriately configured, tested, and updated; xv. Requiring Defendant to meaningfully educate all Class Members about the threats that they face as a result of the loss of their confidential personal identifying information to third parties, as well as the steps affected individuals must take to protect themselves; and

xvi. Requiring Defendant to implement logging and monitoring programs sufficient to track traffic to and from Defendant's servers; and

xvii. for a period of 10 years, appointing a qualified and independent third party assessor to conduct a SOC 2 Type 2 attestation on an annual basis to evaluate Defendant's compliance with the terms of the Court's final judgment, to provide such report to the Court and to counsel for the Class, and to report any deficiencies with compliance of the Court's final judgment.

- E. For equitable relief requiring restitution and disgorgement of the revenues wrongfully retained as a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct;
- F. Ordering Defendant to pay for not less than ten years of credit monitoring services for Plaintiff and the Class;
- G. For an award of actual damages, compensatory damages, statutory damages, and statutory penalties, in an amount to be determined, as allowable by law;

- H. For an award of punitive damages, as allowable by law;
- I. For an award of attorneys' fees and costs, and any other expense, including expert witness fees;
- J. Pre- and post-judgment interest on any amounts awarded; and
- K. Such other and further relief as this court may deem just and proper.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all claims so triable.

Dated: May 12, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ T. J. Jesky
T. J. Jesky (IL ARDC 6235691)
Law Offices of T. J. Jesky
205 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 810
Chicago, IL 60601-5902
tj@jeskylaw.com
Telephone: 312-894-0130, Ext. 3
Fax: 312-489-8216
Counsel for Plaintiff

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Ascension Health Data Breach Lawsuit Filed After May 2024 Cyberattack Affecting MyChart Portal](#)
