

## **Beaumont Hospital Stolen Computer Data Safety**

FRANKLIN, Mich. – August 25, 2006 – Beaumont Hospital officials were able to allay concerns over potential theft of patient information from a stolen laptop computer that was recovered this week, due to the efforts of a specialized Oakland County firm, Spectrum Computer Forensics and Risk Management LLC.

Computer forensics is a relatively new and highly focused area according to Stott Matthews, Spectrum's principal, who conducted the rigorous analysis of the laptop's hard drive to determine whether any of the 28,473 William Beaumont Hospital Home Care patient records had been accessed.

"We confirmed with certainty that no patient data had been accessed," Matthews said. Spectrum Computer Forensics conclusions were affirmed by analysis by the vendor whose software is used to manage the encrypted patient information in the Beaumont system.

To most people, the bits and bytes on a computer are viewed in the form of an email, a written report, or maybe personal finance data, but to Matthews they tell a larger story.

Computer forensics is an emerging field increasingly used to answer critical questions about the use of a computer and its contents in situations such as the theft of the Beaumont laptop used in the field by a nurse visiting patients, or the laptop stolen from a home outside Washington, DC, that contained millions of personal data records of Veterans Administration clients.

"With all but a fraction of the data created today in digital format, whether on a computer, PDA, or similar device, understanding what the bits and bytes are telling you is of increasing importance to all companies," according to Matthews.

"Computer forensics can help companies understand the breadth and scope of various issues, whether they relate to employment matters or conformance to internal policies," Matthews said. Those issues can impact areas of Sarbanes-Oxley, the federally-mandated accounting standards, or HIPAA regulations covering privacy of patient medical records.

"Computer forensics also is playing an increasingly important role in law firms, supporting them and their clients in a wide variety of litigation-related activities," Matthews noted.

The computer forensics expert pointed out that Beaumont Hospital, in addition to encrypting the data that went into the field, was quick to call Spectrum when the computer was recovered.

"Most companies IT departments are not equipped to properly handle such digital sleuthing. There are important protocols that must be followed in the handling of digital media, such as hard drives, in these situations," Matthews explained.

In this case, calling in the experts at Spectrum Computer Forensics and Risk Management provided verifiable evidence that the patient data safety had not been compromised.

### **About Spectrum Computer Forensics & Risk Management**

Spectrum is a leader in providing digital-discovery and computer-forensics services, and the risk-mitigation strategies that surround these practice areas. Law firms and corporations rely on Spectrum for the most challenging e-discovery work involving employment, trade secret, intellectual property, and other litigation-related matters. Founder and Principal, J. Stott Matthews, is certified in computer forensics. Together with his experience as a Fortune 10 executive, Matthews' expertise bridges the critical gap between technology, business, and the law. Spectrum has offices in Michigan and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.