

Report on Patient Privacy Volume 22, Number 6. June 09, 2022 A Cyberattack 'Can Happen to You'

By Theresa Defino

Steven Leffler, MD, would sometimes zone out when Doug Gentile, MD, brought up cybersecurity. Leffler is the chief operating officer of the University of Vermont Medical (UVM) Center, and Gentile is the senior vice president for information technology (IT) at the University of Vermont Health Network. Both are also former emergency medicine physicians.

But that was *before*.

“I always thought that cyberattacks were something you read about happening to other places. And I’ve told this [to] Doug a bunch of times—when he would come talk to us about cybersecurity, that was when I would probably look at my phone or something,” Leffler said, adding, “I no longer do that.”

Leffler and Gentile recently talked about the October 2020 cyberattack on UVM during a podcast with John Riggi, senior advisor for cybersecurity and risk for the American Hospital Association (AHA).^[1]

Organizations must pay “more attention to cybersecurity,” said Leffler. The attack on UVM, which took a month to remediate, is proof it “can happen to you.” And when asked for more funds for cybersecurity, leaders should say yes, he advised.

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