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◆ New England Dermatology P.C., d/b/a New England Dermatology and Laser Center (NEDLC), agreed to pay \$300,640 to settle a potential HIPAA violation over the improper disposal of protected health information (PHI), the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) said Aug. 23.^[1] NEDLC also agreed to implement a corrective action plan. According to its resolution agreement, NEDLC filed a breach notification report with OCR in May 2021 saying that empty specimen containers labeled with PHI were in its parking lot. One of them was found by a third-party security guard. “All of NEDLC’s specimen containers bear a label with the corresponding patient’s PHI. The PHI on the specimen label included patient names, dates of birth, dates of sample collection, and name of the provider who took the specimen,” according to the agreement. “NEDLC stated that it regularly discarded specimen containers with an attached label that contained PHI as regular waste, bagged and placed in an exterior dumpster accessible via the parking lot, without alteration to the PHI containing label.” This practice took place from Feb. 4, 2011, until March 31, 2021. NEDLC didn’t admit liability in the settlement.

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