

## Preventing Medical Identity Theft

Has someone helped themselves to your personal information to get medical services? Maybe they used your name or healthcare number when they visited a doctor or clinic

**How can you find out?** You might find out the next time you visit the doctor, clinic or hospital, when your diagnosis, treatment and medication will be based on that other person's medical history because it's now recorded as *yours*.

If they have mental illness, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS or another disease, your medical record will say that *you* have that disease. If they use illegal drugs, your medical record will say that *you* use illegal drugs.

And with the international exchange of detailed personal information mandated by our governments, the erroneous information on your medical record could get you barred from other countries because your medical record says *you* use illicit drugs.

**How dangerous can Medical Identity Theft really be?** Many people around the world have found out what happens when they receive the blood type that matches someone else's blood, or the best treatment for someone else's condition. Imagine being denied medication because your medical record shows that you're allergic to it!

Medical Identity Theft also results in false and fraudulent claims being made to government and private health insurers. If that's not enough, Medical Identity thieves sometimes steal their victims' full identities, and cause financial and legal problems as well. Imagine being denied life insurance or health coverage because *you* have serious medical conditions, bad credit, and a criminal record.

**How does Medical Identity Theft happen?** Sadly, it's easy for anyone with the right opportunity. A roommate, relative, or stranger. A pharmacist with access to your electronic health record. Or even someone works at your doctor's office or in the health care system. They all have access to your sensitive personal information.

### **Take these steps to avoid becoming a victim of Medical Identity Theft:**

- ✓ Guard your provincial health and private insurer cards. Your life just might depend on it.
- ✓ Cross-shred personal documents, letters, bills, statements, transaction receipts, and unsolicited offers. Anything that has your personal information — including computers and cellphones — should be destroyed before being put into the garbage or the recycle bin.
- ✓ Obtain a statement of medical benefits paid by your provincial and private insurers. Make sure that the services provided really were provided to you. Immediately report any discrepancies.

### **If you suspect that you are the victim of Medical Identity Theft**

immediately contact your local police service, health insurers, and file a report with the Canadian Health Care Anti-Fraud Association at <http://www.chcaa.org/report/>

For more information about practical ways to protect privacy and reduce risk, visit [www.AMINAcorp.ca](http://www.AMINAcorp.ca) or contact us by email at [info@AMINAcorp.ca](mailto:info@AMINAcorp.ca) or by phone at +1.403.254.4376 for a private conversation.