



AlaFile E-Notice

01-CV-2024-900914.00

To: DAVID FRANCIS MICELI
dmiceli@milberg.com

NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA

KIM TOWNSEL V. HENDERSON & WALTON WOMEN'S CENTER, P.C.
01-CV-2024-900914.00

The following complaint was FILED on 2/29/2024 8:47:12 AM

Notice Date: 2/29/2024 8:47:12 AM

JACQUELINE ANDERSON SMITH
CIRCUIT COURT CLERK
JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
716 N. RICHARD ARRINGTON BLVD.
BIRMINGHAM, AL, 35203

205-325-5355
jackie.smith@alacourt.gov



State of Alabama
Unified Judicial System
Form ARCiv-93 Rev. 9/18

COVER SHEET
CIRCUIT COURT - CIVIL CASE
(Not For Domestic Relations Cases)

Case: 01
Date of Filing: 02/29/2024
Judge Code:

GENERAL INFORMATION

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
KIM TOWNSEL v. HENDERSON & WALTON WOMEN'S CENTER, P.C.

First Plaintiff: Business Individual Government Other
First Defendant: Business Individual Government Other

NATURE OF SUIT: Select primary cause of action, by checking box (check only one) that best characterizes your action:

TORTS: PERSONAL INJURY

- WDEA - Wrongful Death
- TONG - Negligence: General
- TOMV - Negligence: Motor Vehicle
- TOWA - Wantonness
- TOPL - Product Liability/AEMLD
- TOMM - Malpractice-Medical
- TOLM - Malpractice-Legal
- TOOM - Malpractice-Other
- TBFM - Fraud/Bad Faith/Misrepresentation
- TOXX - Other: _____

TORTS: PERSONAL INJURY

- TOPE - Personal Property
- TORE - Real Property

OTHER CIVIL FILINGS

- ABAN - Abandoned Automobile
- ACCT - Account & Nonmortgage
- APAA - Administrative Agency Appeal
- ADPA - Administrative Procedure Act
- ANPS - Adults in Need of Protective Service

OTHER CIVIL FILINGS (cont'd)

- MSXX - Birth/Death Certificate Modification/Bond Forfeiture Appeal/ Enforcement of Agency Subpoena/Petition to Preserve
- CVRT - Civil Rights
- COND - Condemnation/Eminent Domain/Right-of-Way
- CTMP - Contempt of Court
- CONT - Contract/Ejection/Writ of Seizure
- TOCN - Conversion
- EQND - Equity Non-Damages Actions/Declaratory Judgment/ Injunction Election Contest/Quiet Title/Sale For Division
- CVUD - Eviction Appeal/Unlawful Detainer
- FORJ - Foreign Judgment
- FORF - Fruits of Crime Forfeiture
- MSHC - Habeas Corpus/Extraordinary Writ/Mandamus/Prohibition
- PFAB - Protection From Abuse
- EPFA - Elder Protection From Abuse
- QTLB - Quiet Title Land Bank
- FELA - Railroad/Seaman (FELA)
- RPRO - Real Property
- WTEG - Will/Trust/Estate/Guardianship/Conservatorship
- COMP - Workers' Compensation
- CVXX - Miscellaneous Circuit Civil Case

ORIGIN: F **INITIAL FILING** A **APPEAL FROM DISTRICT COURT** O **OTHER**
R **REMANDED** T **TRANSFERRED FROM OTHER CIRCUIT COURT**

HAS JURY TRIAL BEEN DEMANDED? **YES** **NO** Note: Checking "Yes" does not constitute a demand for a jury trial. (See Rules 38 and 39, Ala.R.Civ.P, for procedure)

RELIEF REQUESTED: **MONETARY AWARD REQUESTED** **NO MONETARY AWARD REQUESTED**

ATTORNEY CODE:

MIC006

2/29/2024 8:47:11 AM

/s/ DAVID FRANCIS MICELI

Date

Signature of Attorney/Party filing this form

MEDIATION REQUESTED: **YES** **NO** **UNDECIDED**

Election to Proceed under the Alabama Rules for Expedited Civil Actions: **YES** **NO**



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA

KIM TOWNSEL, on behalf of herself
and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

HENDERSON & WALTON WOMEN’S
CENTER, P.C.,

Defendant.

Case No. _____

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Kim Townsel (“Plaintiff”) brings this Class Action Complaint (“Complaint”) against Defendant Henderson & Walton Women’s Center, P.C. (“H&W” 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:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This class action arises out of the recent data breach (“Data Breach”) involving Defendant, a healthcare provider, specializing in “women’s health care[,]” that has provided medical services “for more than 30 years in the Birmingham and

surrounding areas.”¹

2. Plaintiff brings this Complaint against Defendant for its failure to properly secure and safeguard the sensitive and confidential information that it collected and maintained as part of its regular business practices, including, but not limited to: names, dates of birth, driver’s license or state ID numbers (“personally identifying information” or “PII”), and medical and treatment 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”).

3. In order to obtain medical services from Defendant, former and current H&W patients are required to entrust Defendant with sensitive, non-public Private Information, without which Defendant could not perform its regular business activities. Defendant retains this information for at least many years and even after the patient-physician relationship has ended.

4. By obtaining, collecting, using, and deriving a benefit from the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members, Defendant assumed legal and equitable duties to those individuals to protect and safeguard that information from unauthorized access and intrusion.

5. On an undisclosed date, H&W “discovered a cybersecurity breach

¹ <https://hwwc.net/>

occurred when one HWWC employee's email account was hacked.”² H&W subsequently “engaged a computer forensic-investigation expert to determine the extent of the hackers’ access to information.”³ As a result of its investigation, H&W concluded that Plaintiff and Class Members’ Private Information was compromised in the Data Breach.⁴

6. Defendant failed to adequately protect Plaintiff's and Class Members Private Information—and failed to even encrypt or redact this highly sensitive information. This unencrypted, unredacted Private Information was compromised due to Defendant's negligent and/or careless acts and omissions and its utter failure to protect patients' sensitive data. Hackers targeted and obtained Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information because of its value in exploiting and stealing the identities of Plaintiff and Class Members. The present and continuing risk to victims of the Data Breach will remain for their respective lifetimes.

7. In breaching its duties to properly safeguard patients' Private Information and give patients timely, adequate notice of the Data Breach's occurrence, Defendant's conduct amounts to negligence and/or recklessness and violates federal and state statutes.

² The “Notice Letter”. A sample copy is available at <https://hwwc.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/HWWC-Notification-Letter.pdf>

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

8. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of all persons whose Private Information was compromised as a result of Defendant's failure to: (i) adequately protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members; (ii) warn Plaintiff and Class Members of Defendant's inadequate information security practices; and (iii) effectively secure hardware containing protected Private Information using reasonable and effective security procedures free of vulnerabilities and incidents. Defendant's conduct amounts at least to negligence and violates federal and state statutes.

9. Defendant disregarded the rights of Plaintiff and Class Members by intentionally, willfully, recklessly, or negligently failing to implement and maintain adequate and reasonable measures to ensure that the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members was safeguarded, failing to take available steps to prevent an unauthorized disclosure of data, and failing to follow applicable, required, and appropriate protocols, policies, and procedures regarding the encryption of data, even for internal use. As a result, the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members was compromised through disclosure to an unknown and unauthorized third party. Plaintiff and Class Members have a continuing interest in ensuring that their information is and remains safe, and they should be entitled to injunctive and other equitable relief.

10. Plaintiff and Class Members have suffered injury as a result of Defendant's conduct. These injuries include: (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) experiencing an increase in spam calls, texts, and/or emails; (viii) Plaintiff's Private Information being disseminated on the dark web, according to Google; (ix) statutory damages; (x) nominal damages; and (xi) 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.

11. Plaintiff and Class Members seek to remedy these harms and prevent any future data compromise on behalf of themselves and all similarly situated persons whose personal data was compromised and stolen as a result of the Data Breach and who remain at risk due to Defendant's inadequate data security practices.

PARTIES

12. Plaintiff Kim Townsel is and has been, at all relevant times, a resident and citizen of Glencoe, Alabama. Ms. Townsel provided her Private Information to Defendant on the condition that it be maintained as confidential and with the understanding that Defendant would employ reasonable safeguards to protect her Private Information. If Ms. Townsel had known that Defendant would not adequately protect her Private Information, she would not have entrusted Defendant with her Private Information or allowed Defendant to maintain this sensitive Private Information.

13. Defendant is a corporation organized under the state laws of Alabama with its principal place of business located in Birmingham, Alabama.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

14. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action under Ala. Code § 12-11-30(1) because the amount in controversy exceeds the sum of \$20,000 exclusive of interest and costs.

15. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because its principal place of business is in this District and the acts and omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in and emanated from this District. Defendant has sufficient contacts in Alabama, as it conducts a significant amount of its business in the State of Alabama.

16. Venue is proper under Ala. Code § 6-3-7(a)(1)-(2) because Defendant's principal place of business is in this District.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Defendant's Business

17. Defendant is a healthcare provider, specializing in "women's health care[,]" that has provided medical services "for more than 30 years in the Birmingham and surrounding areas."⁵

18. Plaintiff and Class Members are current or former patients at Defendant.

19. In order to obtain medical services from Defendant, Plaintiff and Class Members were required to provide sensitive and confidential Private Information, including their names, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, health insurance information, health information, and other sensitive information.

20. The information held by Defendant in its computer systems at the time of the Data Breach included the unencrypted Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

21. Defendant made promises and representations to its patients, including Plaintiff and Class Members, that the Private Information collected from them as a condition of receiving medical services at Defendant would be kept safe,

⁵ <https://hwwc.net/>

confidential, that the privacy of that information would be maintained, and that Defendant would delete any sensitive information after it was no longer required to maintain it.

22. Indeed, Defendant's Privacy Policy provides that: "[t]he policy of Henderson & Walton Women's Center, PC is to protect the confidentiality, integrity and security of the protected health and personal information of our patients and to prevent unauthorized access to, or the use or disclosure of such information. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information[.]"⁶

23. Plaintiff and Class Members provided their Private Information to Defendant with the reasonable expectation and on the mutual understanding that Defendant would comply with its obligations to keep such information confidential and secure from unauthorized access.

24. Plaintiff and the Class Members have taken reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of their Private Information. Plaintiff and Class Members relied on the sophistication of Defendant to keep their Private Information confidential and securely maintained, to use this information for necessary purposes only, and to make only authorized disclosures of this information. Plaintiff and Class Members value the confidentiality of their Private Information and demand security to safeguard their Private Information.

⁶ <https://hwwc.net/privacy-policy/>

25. Defendant had a duty to adopt reasonable measures to protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members from involuntary disclosure to third parties. Defendant has a legal duty to keep consumer's Private Information safe and confidential.

26. Defendant had obligations created by FTC Act, HIPAA, contract, industry standards, and representations made to Plaintiff and Class Members, to keep their Private Information confidential and to protect it from unauthorized access and disclosure.

27. Defendant derived a substantial economic benefit from collecting Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information. Without the required submission of Private Information, Defendant could not perform the medical services it provides.

28. By obtaining, collecting, using, and deriving a benefit from 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.

The Data Breach

29. On or about August 23, 2022, Defendant began sending Plaintiff and other Data Breach victims an untitled letter ("Notice Letter"), informing them that:

Henderson & Walton Women's Center, P.C. ("HWWC") recently discovered a cybersecurity breach occurred when one HWWC employee's email account

was hacked. Upon discovery of the incident, HWWC immediately conducted an investigation and implemented additional security measures which remain in place.

...

HWWC immediately engaged a computer forensic-investigation expert to determine the extent of the hackers' access to information. The forensic investigators conducted a thorough review of both the nature of the cyberattack and the contents of the email account in an effort to determine which patients' personal information may have been accessible to the hackers. This lengthy process concluded on or about June 24, 2022.

You are receiving this letter because some of your personal information was contained within the email account. Not all affected patients had the same set of personal information contained within the email account, but the breach involved one or more of the following types of information related to each affected patient: date of birth; social security number; medical information; health insurance information; driver's license or state ID number.⁷

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

31. This "disclosure" amounts to no real disclosure at all, as it fails to inform, with any degree of specificity, Plaintiff and Class Members of the Data

⁷ Notice Letter.

Breach's critical facts. Without these details, Plaintiff's and Class Members' ability to mitigate the harms resulting from the Data Breach is severely diminished.

32. 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.

33. The attacker accessed and acquired files in Defendant's computer systems containing unencrypted Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members, including their names, Social Security numbers, PHI, and other sensitive information.

34. Plaintiff has been informed that her Private Information has been disseminated on the dark web, and Plaintiff further believes that the Private Information of Class Members, was subsequently sold on the dark web following the Data Breach, as that is the *modus operandi* of cybercriminals that commit cyber-attacks of this type.

Data Breaches Are Preventable

35. As explained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, “[p]revention is the most effective defense against ransomware and it is critical to take precautions for protection.”⁸

36. 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:

- Implement an awareness and training program. Because end users are targets, employees and individuals should be aware of the threat of ransomware and how it is delivered.
- 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.
- Scan all incoming and outgoing emails to detect threats and filter executable files from reaching end users.
- Configure firewalls to block access to known malicious IP addresses.
- Patch operating systems, software, and firmware on devices. Consider using a centralized patch management system.
- Set anti-virus and anti-malware programs to conduct regular scans automatically.
- 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.

⁸ See How to Protect Your Networks from RANSOMWARE, at 3, available at <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/ransomware-prevention-and-response-for-cisos.pdf/view>

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Consider disabling Remote Desktop protocol (RDP) if it is not being used.
- Use application whitelisting, which only allows systems to execute programs known and permitted by security policy.
- Execute operating system environments or specific programs in a virtualized environment.
- Categorize data based on organizational value and implement physical and logical separation of networks and data for different organizational units.⁹

37. To prevent and detect cyber-attacks or ransomware attacks, Defendant could and should have implemented, as recommended by the Microsoft Threat Protection Intelligence Team, the following measures:

Secure internet-facing assets

- Apply latest security updates
- Use threat and vulnerability management
- Perform regular audit; remove privileged credentials;

⁹ *Id.* at 3-4.

Thoroughly investigate and remediate alerts

- Prioritize and treat commodity malware infections as potential full compromise;

Include IT Pros in security discussions

- Ensure collaboration among [security operations], [security admins], and [information technology] admins to configure servers and other endpoints securely;

Build credential hygiene

- Use [multifactor authentication] or [network level authentication] and use strong, randomized, just-in-time local admin passwords;

Apply principle of least-privilege

- Monitor for adversarial activities
- Hunt for brute force attempts
- Monitor for cleanup of Event Logs
- Analyze logon events;

Harden infrastructure

- Use Windows Defender Firewall
- Enable tamper protection
- Enable cloud-delivered protection
- Turn on attack surface reduction rules and [Antimalware Scan Interface] for Office[Visual Basic for Applications].¹⁰

38. Defendant had the resources necessary to prevent the Data Breach but neglected to adequately invest in security measures, despite its obligation to protect

¹⁰ See Human-operated ransomware attacks: A preventable disaster (Mar 5, 2020), *available at*: <https://www.microsoft.com/security/blog/2020/03/05/human-operated-ransomware-attacks-a-preventable-disaster/>

such information.

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

40. 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 more than thirty thousand patients' Private Information,¹¹ including that of Plaintiff and Class Members.

Defendant Acquires, Collects, and Stores Patients' Private Information

41. As a condition to obtain medical services from Defendant, Plaintiff and Class Members were required to give their sensitive and confidential Private Information to Defendant.

42. Defendant retains and stores this information and derives a substantial economic benefit from the Private Information that it collects. But for the collection of Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information, Defendant would be unable to perform its medical services.

¹¹ <https://www.hipaajournal.com/data-breach-henderson-walton-womens-center-genesis-health-care-inc/>

43. By obtaining, collecting, and storing the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members, Defendant assumed legal and equitable duties and knew or should have known that they were responsible for protecting the Private Information from disclosure.

44. Plaintiff and Class Members have taken reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of their Private Information and relied on Defendant to keep their Private Information confidential and maintained securely, to use this information for business purposes only, and to make only authorized disclosures of this information.

45. Defendant could have prevented this Data Breach by properly securing and encrypting the files and file servers containing the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

46. Upon information and belief, Defendant made promises to Plaintiff and Class Members to maintain and protect their Private Information, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of securing Private Information.

47. Indeed, Defendant's Privacy Policy provides that: "[t]he policy of Henderson & Walton Women's Center, PC is to protect the confidentiality, integrity and security of the protected health and personal information of our patients and to prevent unauthorized access to, or the use or disclosure of such information. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information[.]"¹²

¹² <https://hwwc.net/privacy-policy/>

Defendant Knew or Should Have Known of the Risk Because Healthcare Entities in Possession of PII & PHI are Particularly Susceptable to Cyber Attacks

48. Data thieves regularly target healthcare entities like Defendant due to the highly sensitive information that they custody. Defendant knew and understood that unprotected Private Information is valuable and highly sought after by criminal parties who seek to illegally monetize that Private Information through unauthorized access.

49. 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 and other sensitive information, like Defendant, preceding the date of the breach.

50. In the third quarter of the 2023 fiscal year alone, 7333 organizations experienced data breaches, resulting in 66,658,764 individuals' personal information being compromised.¹³

51. 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

¹³ See <https://www.idtheftcenter.org/publication/q3-data-breach-2023-analysis/>

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.

52. As a custodian of Private Information, Defendant knew, or should have known, the importance of safeguarding the Private Information entrusted to it by Plaintiff and Class members, and of the foreseeable consequences if its data security systems were breached, including the significant costs imposed on Plaintiff and Class Members as a result of a breach.

53. Indeed, cyber-attacks, such as the one experienced by Defendant, have become so notorious that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) and U.S. Secret Service have issued a warning to potential targets so they are aware of, and prepared for, a potential attack. As one report explained, smaller entities that store Private Information are “attractive to ransomware criminals...because they often have lesser IT defenses and a high incentive to regain access to their data quickly.”¹⁴

54. Additionally, as companies became more dependent on computer systems to run their business,¹⁵ e.g., working remotely as a result of the Covid-19

¹⁴https://www.law360.com/consumerprotection/articles/1220974/fbi-secret-service-warn-of-targeted-ransomware?nl_pk=3ed44a08-fcc2-4b6c-89f0-aa0155a8bb51&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=consumerprotection

¹⁵ <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/implications-of-cyber-risk-for-financial-stability-20220512.html>

pandemic, and the Internet of Things (“IoT”), the danger posed by cybercriminals is magnified, thereby highlighting the need for adequate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards.¹⁶

55. Despite the prevalence of public announcements of data breach and data security compromises, Defendant failed to take appropriate steps to protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members from being compromised.

56. 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.

57. Defendant was, or should have been, fully aware of the unique type and the significant volume of data on Defendant's server(s), amounting to potentially more than thirty thousand individuals' detailed, Private Information, and, thus, the significant number of individuals who would be harmed by the exposure of the unencrypted data.

58. In the Notice Letter, Defendant makes an offer of only 12 months of identity monitoring services. This is wholly inadequate to compensate Plaintiff and

¹⁶ <https://www.picussecurity.com/key-threats-and-cyber-risks-facing-financial-services-and-banking-firms-in-2022>

Class Members as it fails to provide for the fact victims of data breaches and other unauthorized disclosures commonly face multiple years of ongoing identity theft, financial fraud, and it entirely fails to provide sufficient compensation for the unauthorized release and disclosure of Plaintiff and Class Members' Private Information. Moreover, once this service expires, Plaintiff and Class Members will be forced to pay out of pocket for necessary identity monitoring services.

59. Defendant's offer of credit and identity monitoring establishes that Plaintiff and Class Members' sensitive Private Information *was* in fact accessed, compromised, and exfiltrated from Defendant's computer systems.

60. 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.

61. 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—particularly Social Security numbers and PHI—fraudulent use of that information and damage to victims may continue for years.

62. As a healthcare entity in possession of its patients' and former patients' Private Information, Defendant knew, or should have known, the importance of safeguarding the 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. Nevertheless, Defendant failed to take adequate cybersecurity measures to prevent the Data Breach.

The Value of PII and PHI

63. The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) defines identity theft as “a fraud committed or attempted using the identifying information of another person without authority.”¹⁷ 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.”¹⁸

64. 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.¹⁹

¹⁷ 17 C.F.R. § 248.201 (2013).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *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-dark-web-how-much-it-costs/>

65. For example, PII can be sold at a price ranging from \$40 to \$200.²⁰ Criminals can also purchase access to entire company data breaches from \$900 to \$4,500.²¹

66. Social Security numbers, which were compromised for some of the Class Members as alleged herein, for example, are among the worst kind of PII to have stolen because they may be put to a variety of fraudulent uses and are difficult for an individual to change. The Social Security Administration stresses that the loss of an individual's Social Security number, as is the case here, can lead to identity theft and extensive financial fraud:

A dishonest person who has your Social Security number can use it to get other personal information about you. Identity thieves can use your number and your good credit to apply for more credit in your name. Then, they use the credit cards and don't pay the bills, it damages your credit. You may not find out that someone is using your number until you're turned down for credit, or you begin to get calls from unknown creditors demanding payment for items you never bought. Someone illegally using your Social Security number and assuming your identity can cause a lot of problems.²²

67. What's more, it is no easy task to change or cancel a stolen Social Security number. An individual cannot obtain a new Social Security number without significant paperwork and evidence of actual misuse. In other words, preventive

²⁰ *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-your-personal-information-is-selling-for-on-the-dark-web/>

²¹ *In the Dark*, VPNOverview, 2019, available at: <https://vpnoverview.com/privacy/anonymous-browsing/in-the-dark/>

²² Social Security Administration, *Identity Theft and Your Social Security Number*, available at: <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10064.pdf>

action to defend against the possibility of misuse of a Social Security number is not permitted; an individual must show evidence of actual, ongoing fraud activity to obtain a new number.

68. Even then, a new Social Security number may not be effective. According to Julie Ferguson of the Identity Theft Resource Center, “[t]he credit bureaus and banks are able to link the new number very quickly to the old number, so all of that old bad information is quickly inherited into the new Social Security number.”²³

69. Driver’s license numbers, which were compromised in the Data Breach, are incredibly valuable. “Hackers harvest license numbers because they’re a very valuable piece of information.”²⁴

70. A driver’s license can be a critical part of a fraudulent, synthetic identity – which go for about \$1200 on the Dark Web. On its own, a forged license can sell for around \$200.”²⁵

71. According to national credit bureau Experian:

²³ Bryan Naylor, *Victims of Social Security Number Theft Find It’s Hard to Bounce Back*, NPR (Feb. 9, 2015), available at: <http://www.npr.org/2015/02/09/384875839/data-stolen-by-anthem-s-hackers-has-millionsworrying-about-identity-theft>

²⁴ *Hackers Stole Customers’ License Numbers From Geico In Months-Long Breach*, Forbes, Apr. 20, 2021, available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/leemathews/2021/04/20/hackers-stole-customers-license-numbers-from-geico-in-months-long-breach/?sh=3bda585e8658>

²⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/leemathews/2021/04/20/hackers-stole-customers-license-numbers-from-geico-in-months-long-breach/?sh=3e4755c38658>

A driver's license is an identity thief's paradise. With that one card, someone knows your birthdate, address, and even your height, eye color, and signature. If someone gets your driver's license number, it is also concerning because it's connected to your vehicle registration and insurance policies, as well as records on file with the Department of Motor Vehicles, place of employment (that keep a copy of your driver's license on file), doctor's office, government agencies, and other entities. Having access to that one number can provide an identity thief with several pieces of information they want to know about you. Next to your Social Security number, your driver's license number is one of the most important pieces of information to keep safe from thieves.

72. According to cybersecurity specialty publication CPO Magazine, “[t]o those unfamiliar with the world of fraud, driver’s license numbers might seem like a relatively harmless piece of information to lose if it happens in isolation.”²⁶

However, this is not the case. As cybersecurity experts point out:

“It’s a gold mine for hackers. With a driver’s license number, bad actors can manufacture fake IDs, slotting in the number for any form that requires ID verification, or use the information to craft curated social engineering phishing attacks.”²⁷

73. Victims of driver’s license number theft also often suffer unemployment benefit fraud, as described in a recent New York Times article.²⁸

²⁶ <https://www.cpomagazine.com/cyber-security/geico-data-breach-leaks-drivers-license-numbers-advises-customers-to-watch-out-for-fraudulent-unemployment-claims/>

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *How Identity Thieves Took My Wife for a Ride*, NY Times, April 27, 2021, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/your-money/identity-theft-auto-insurance.html>

74. 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.”²⁹

75. The greater efficiency of electronic health records brings the risk of privacy breaches. These electronic health records contain a lot of sensitive information (*e.g.*, patient data, patient diagnosis, lab results, medications, prescriptions, treatment plans, etc.) that is valuable to cybercriminals. One patient’s complete record can be sold for hundreds of dollars on the dark web. As such, PHI/PII is a valuable commodity for which a “cyber black market” exists where criminals openly post stolen payment card numbers, Social Security numbers, and other personal information on several underground internet websites. Unsurprisingly, the pharmaceutical industry is at high risk and is acutely affected by cyberattacks, like the Data Breach here.

76. Between 2005 and 2019, at least 249 million people were affected by healthcare data breaches.³⁰ Indeed, during 2019 alone, over 41 million healthcare

²⁹ *Medical I.D. Theft, EFraudPrevention*
<https://efraudprevention.net/home/education/?a=187#:~:text=A%20thief%20may%20use%20your,credit%20report%20may%20be%20affected.>

³⁰ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7349636/#B5-healthcare-08-00133/>

records were exposed, stolen, or unlawfully disclosed in 505 data breaches.³¹ In short, these sorts of data breaches are increasingly common, especially among healthcare systems, which account for 30.03 percent of overall health data breaches, according to cybersecurity firm Tenable.³²

77. According to account monitoring company LogDog, medical data sells for \$50 and up on the Dark Web.³³

78. “Medical identity theft is a growing and dangerous crime that leaves its victims with little to no recourse for recovery,” reported Pam Dixon, executive director of World Privacy Forum. “Victims often experience financial repercussions and worse yet, they frequently discover erroneous information has been added to their personal medical files due to the thief’s activities.”³⁴

79. A study by Experian found that the average cost of medical identity theft is “about \$20,000” per incident and that most victims of medical identity theft were forced to pay out-of-pocket costs for healthcare they did not receive to restore coverage.³⁵ Almost half of medical identity theft victims lose their healthcare

³¹ <https://www.hipaajournal.com/december-2019-healthcare-data-breach-report/>

³² <https://www.tenable.com/blog/healthcare-security-ransomware-plays-a-prominent-role-incovid-19-era-breaches/>

³³ 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>

³⁴ Michael Ollove, “The Rise of Medical Identity Theft in Healthcare,” Kaiser Health News, Feb. 7, 2014, <https://khn.org/news/rise-of-identity-theft/>

³⁵ See Elinor Mills, “Study: Medical Identity Theft is Costly for Victims,” CNET (Mar. 3, 2010), <https://www.cnet.com/news/study-medical-identity-theft-is-costly-for-victims/>

coverage as a result of the incident, while nearly one-third of medical identity theft victims saw their insurance premiums rise, and 40 percent were never able to resolve their identity theft at all.³⁶

80. 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 change—PHI, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, and names.

81. 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 and Social Security numbers are worth more than 10x on the black market.”³⁷

82. 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.

³⁶ *Id.*; see also *Healthcare Data Breach: What to Know About them and What to Do After One*, EXPERIAN, <https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/healthcare-data-breach-what-to-know-about-them-and-what-to-do-after-one/>

³⁷ 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-10x-price-of-stolen-credit-card-numbers.html>

83. 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.³⁸

84. 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.

Defendant Fails to Comply with FTC Guidelines

85. 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.

³⁸ *Report to Congressional Requesters*, GAO, at 29 (June 2007), available at: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-07-737.pdf>

86. 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.³⁹

87. The guidelines also recommend that 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.⁴⁰

88. The FTC further recommends that 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; monitor for suspicious activity on the network; and verify that third-party service providers have implemented reasonable security measures.

³⁹ *Protecting Personal Information: A Guide for Business*, Federal Trade Commission (2016). Available at https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/plain-language/pdf-0136_proteting-personal-information.pdf

⁴⁰ *Id.*

89. The FTC has brought enforcement actions against businesses for failing to adequately and reasonably protect patient data, treating the failure to employ reasonable and appropriate measures to protect against unauthorized access to confidential consumer 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.

90. These FTC enforcement actions include actions against healthcare entities, like Defendant. *See, e.g., In the Matter of LabMD, Inc., a corp*, 2016-2 Trade Cas. (CCH) ¶ 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.”).

91. 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 businesses, such as Defendant, of failing to use reasonable measures to protect Private Information. The FTC publications and orders described above also form part of the basis of Defendant’s duty in this regard.

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

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

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

Defendant Fails to Comply with HIPAA Guidelines

95. Defendant is a covered entity 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.

96. Defendant is subject to the rules and regulations for safeguarding electronic forms of medical information pursuant to the Health Information Technology Act (“HITECH”).⁴¹ *See* 42 U.S.C. §17921, 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

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

98. 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.

99. 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.

100. “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.

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

⁴¹ 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.

102. 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).

103. 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).

104. 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.

105. 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.*”⁴²

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

107. HIPAA requires a covered entity 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).

108. 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-

⁴² Breach Notification Rule, U.S. Dep’t of Health & Human Services, <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/breach-notification/index.html> (emphasis added).

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 Material.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

Defendant Fails to Comply with Industry Standards

109. 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.

110. 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;

⁴³ <http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/security/guidance/index.html>.

⁴⁴ <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/security/guidance/guidance-risk-analysis/index.html>

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.

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

112. 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.

113. 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.

Defendant Breached its Duty to Safeguard Patients' Private Information

114. In addition to its obligations under federal and state laws, Defendant owed a duty to Plaintiff and Class Members to exercise reasonable care in sharing, obtaining, retaining, securing, safeguarding, deleting, and protecting the Private Information in its possession from being compromised, lost, stolen, accessed, and misused by unauthorized persons. Defendant owed a duty to Plaintiff and Class Members to provide reasonable security, including consistency with industry standards and requirements, and to ensure that its computer systems, networks, and protocols adequately protected the Private Information of Class Members

115. Defendant breached its obligations to Plaintiff and Class Members and/or was otherwise negligent and reckless because it failed to properly maintain and safeguard its computer systems and data. Defendant's unlawful conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following acts and/or omissions:

- a. Failing to maintain an adequate data security system that would reduce the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks;
- b. Failing to adequately protect its patients' Private Information;

- c. Failing to properly monitor its own data security systems for existing intrusions;
- d. Failing to sufficiently train its employees regarding the proper handling of its patients' Private Information;
- e. Failing to fully comply with FTC guidelines for cybersecurity in violation of the FTCA;
- f. Failing to adhere to HIPAA guidelines and industry standards for cybersecurity as discussed above; and
- g. Otherwise breaching its duties and obligations to protect Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information.

116. Defendant negligently and unlawfully failed to safeguard Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information by allowing cyberthieves to access its computer network and systems which contained unsecured and unencrypted Private Information.

117. Had Defendant remedied the deficiencies in its information storage and security systems or those of its vendors and affiliates, followed industry guidelines, and adopted security measures recommended by experts in the field, it could have prevented intrusion into its information storage and security systems and, ultimately, the theft of Plaintiff's and Class Members' confidential Private Information.

Common Injuries and Damages

118. 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: (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.

The Data Breach Increases Victims' Risk of Identity Theft

119. As Plaintiff has already experienced, the unencrypted Private Information of Class Members will end up for sale on the dark web as that is the *modus operandi* of hackers.

120. Unencrypted Private Information may also fall into the hands of companies that will use the detailed Private Information for targeted marketing without the approval of Plaintiff and Class Members. Simply, unauthorized individuals can easily access the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members.

121. 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.

122. Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information is of great value to hackers and cyber criminals, and the data stolen in the Data Breach has been used and will continue to be used in a variety of sordid ways for criminals to exploit Plaintiff and Class Members and to profit off their misfortune.

123. One such example of criminals piecing together bits and pieces of compromised Private Information for profit is the development of "Fullz" packages.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "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, and more. As a rule of thumb, the 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,

124. 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.

125. 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.

126. 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 insurance information) of Plaintiff and the other Class Members.

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-in-underground-stolen-from-texas-life-insurance-finn/](https://krebsonsecurity.com/2014/09/medical-records-for-sale-in-underground-stolen-from-texas-life-insurance-)

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

128. 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 the Risk of Identity Theft and Fraud

129. 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.

130. Thus, due to the actual and imminent risk of identity theft that they face, Defendant’s Notice Letter informs Plaintiff and Class Members that: “[d]ue to the nature of the information potentially compromised . . . we are providing you with one year of credit monitoring service at no charge.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Notice Letter.

131. Plaintiff and Class Members have spent, and will spend additional time in the future, on a variety of prudent actions including, but not limited to: researching and verifying the legitimacy of the Data Breach upon receiving the Notice Letter, contacting credit bureaus to place freezes on their accounts, and changing passwords and resecuring their own computer networks.

132. 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."⁴⁷

133. 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.⁴⁸

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

⁴⁷ 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>.

⁴⁸ See Federal Trade Commission, *Identity Theft.gov*, <https://www.identitytheft.gov/Steps>

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.”^[4]

Diminution of Value of PII and PHI

135. PII and PHI are valuable property rights.⁴⁹ 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 PII and PHI have considerable market value.

136. Sensitive PII can sell for as much as \$363 per record according to the Infosec Institute.⁵⁰

137. An active and robust legitimate marketplace for PII also exists. In 2019, the data brokering industry was worth roughly \$200 billion.⁵¹

138. 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.^{52,53}

⁴⁹ 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> (“GAO Report”).

⁵⁰ See, e.g., John T. Soma, et al, Corporate Privacy Trend: The “Value” of Personally Identifiable Information (“PII”) Equals the “Value” of Financial Assets, 15 Rich. J.L. & Tech. 11, at *3-4 (2009) (“PII, which companies obtain at little cost, has quantifiable value that is rapidly reaching a level comparable to the value of traditional financial assets.”) (citations omitted).

⁵¹ 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/>

⁵² <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2019-11-05/column-data-brokers>

⁵³ <https://datacoup.com/>

Consumers who agree to provide their web browsing history to the Nielsen Corporation can receive up to \$50.00 a year.⁵⁴

139. 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.”⁵⁵

140. According to account monitoring company LogDog, medical data sells for \$50 and up on the Dark Web.⁵⁶

141. 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 now readily available, and the rarity of the Data has been lost, thereby causing additional loss of value.

⁵⁴ <https://digi.me/what-is-digime/>

⁵⁵ *Medical I.D. Theft, EFraudPrevention*
<https://efraudprevention.net/home/education/?a=187#:~:text=A%20thief%20may%20use%20your,credit%20report%20may%20be%20affected>

⁵⁶ 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>

142. 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.

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

144. 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.

145. Defendant was, or should have been, fully aware of the unique type and the significant volume of data on Defendant's network, amounting to more than thirty thousand individuals' detailed personal information and, thus, the significant number of individuals who would be harmed by the exposure of the unencrypted data.

146. 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

147. Given the type of targeted attack in this case, the sophisticated criminal activity, the sensitive type of Private Information involved in this Data Breach, and Plaintiff's Private Information already being disseminated on the dark web (as discussed below), 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.

148. Such fraud may go undetected until debt collection calls commence months, or even years, later. An individual may not know that his or her Private 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.

149. Consequently, Plaintiff and Class Members are at an increased risk of fraud and identity theft for many years into the future.

150. The retail cost of credit monitoring and identity theft monitoring can cost around \$200 a year per Class Member. This is reasonable and necessary cost to

monitor to protect Class Members from the risk of identity theft that arose from Defendant's Data Breach.

Loss of the Benefit of the Bargain

151. Furthermore, Defendant's poor data security deprived Plaintiff and Class Members of the benefit of their bargain. When agreeing to pay Defendant for 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.

Plaintiff Townsel's Experience

152. Plaintiff Kim Townsel is a H&W patient who obtained medical services from Defendant in or about 2022.

153. In order to obtain medical services from Defendant, Ms. Townsel was required to provide her Private Information to Defendant, including her name, date of birth, Social Security number, health insurance information, and medical information.

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

155. Plaintiff Townsel is very careful about sharing her sensitive Private Information. Plaintiff stores any documents containing her 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.

156. Plaintiff Townsel received the Notice Letter, by U.S. mail, directly from Defendant, dated August 23, 2022. According to the Notice Letter, Ms. Townsel's PII and PHI was improperly accessed and obtained by unauthorized third parties, including her date of birth, Social Security number, medical information, health insurance information, and driver's license or state ID number.

157. As a result of the Data Breach, and at the direction of Defendant's Notice Letter, Plaintiff Townsel made reasonable efforts to mitigate the impact of the Data Breach, including researching and verifying the legitimacy of the Data Breach upon receiving the Notice Letter, contacting credit bureaus to place freezes on her accounts, and changing passwords and resecuring her own computer network. Plaintiff has spent significant time on mitigation activities in response to the Data Breach—valuable time that Ms. Townsel otherwise would have spent on other activities, including but not limited to work and/or recreation. This time has been lost forever and cannot be recaptured.

158. Plaintiff Townsel 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 her 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.

159. Plaintiff also suffered actual injury in the form of her Private Information being disseminated on the dark web, according to Google, which, upon information and belief, was caused by the Data Breach.

160. Plaintiff further suffered actual injury in the form of experiencing an increase in spam calls, texts, and/or emails, which, upon information and belief, was caused by the Data Breach.

161. The Data Breach has caused Plaintiff Townsel 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.

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

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

164. Plaintiff Townsel has a continuing interest in ensuring that her Private Information, which, upon information and belief, remain backed up in Defendant's possession, is protected and safeguarded from future breaches.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

165. Pursuant to Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure 23, Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of herself and on behalf of all members of the proposed Class defined as:

All individuals residing in the United States whose Private Information was accessed and/or acquired by an unauthorized party as a result of the data breach reported by Defendant in August 2023 (the "Class").

166. Excluded from the Class and Subclass are the following individuals and/or entities: Defendant and Defendant's parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, officers and directors, and any entity in which Defendant have a controlling interest; all individuals who make a timely election to be excluded from this proceeding using the correct protocol for opting out; and all judges assigned to hear any aspect of this litigation, as well as their immediate family members.

167. Plaintiff reserves the right to amend the definitions of the Class or add a Class or Subclass if further information and discovery indicate that the definitions of the Class should be narrowed, expanded, or otherwise modified.

168. Numerosity — Ala. R. Civ. P. 23(a): The members of the Class are so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable, if not completely impossible. Although the precise number of Class Members is currently unknown to Plaintiff and exclusively in the possession of Defendant, upon information and belief, approximately 34,000 individuals were impacted in the Data Breach.⁵⁷ The Class is apparently identifiable within Defendant's records, and Defendant has already identified these individuals (as evidenced by sending them breach notification letters).

169. Commonality — Ala. R. Civ. P. 23(a): Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Class and predominate over any questions affecting solely individual members of the Class. Among the questions of law and fact common to the Class that predominate over questions which may affect individual Class members, including the following:

- a. Whether and to what extent Defendant had a duty to protect the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members;

⁵⁷ <https://www.hipaajournal.com/data-breach-henderson-walton-womens-center-genesis-health-care-inc/>

- b. Whether Defendant had respective duties not to disclose the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members to unauthorized third parties;
- c. Whether Defendant had respective duties not to use the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members for non-business purposes;
- d. Whether Defendant failed to adequately safeguard the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members;
- e. Whether and when Defendant actually learned of the Data Breach;
- f. Whether Defendant adequately, promptly, and accurately informed Plaintiff and Class Members that their Private Information had been compromised;
- g. Whether Defendant violated the law by failing to promptly notify Plaintiff and Class Members that their Private Information had been compromised;
- h. Whether Defendant failed to implement and maintain reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature and scope of the information compromised in the Data Breach;
- i. Whether Defendant adequately addressed and fixed the vulnerabilities which permitted the Data Breach to occur;

- j. Whether Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to actual damages, statutory damages, and/or nominal damages as a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct; and,
- k. Whether Plaintiff and Class Members are entitled to injunctive relief to redress the imminent and currently ongoing harm faced as a result of the Data Breach.

170. Typicality — Ala. R. Civ. P. 23(a): Plaintiff's claims are typical of those of the other members of the Class because Plaintiff, like every other Class Member, was exposed to virtually identical conduct and now suffers from the same violations of the law as each other member of the Class.

171. Policies Generally Applicable to the Class — Ala. R. Civ. P. 23(a): This class action is also appropriate for certification because Defendant acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the Class, thereby requiring the Court's imposition of uniform relief to ensure compatible standards of conduct toward the Class Members and making final injunctive relief appropriate with respect to the Class as a whole. Defendant's policies challenged herein apply to and affect Class Members uniformly and Plaintiff's challenge of these policies hinges on Defendant's conduct with respect to the Class as a whole, not on facts or law applicable only to Plaintiff.

172. Adequacy — Ala. R. Civ. P. 23(a): Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the Class Members in that she has no disabling conflicts of interest that would be antagonistic to those of the other Class Members. Plaintiff seeks no relief that is antagonistic or adverse to the Class Members and the infringement of the rights and the damages she has suffered are typical of other Class Members. Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in complex class action and data breach litigation, and Plaintiff intends to prosecute this action vigorously.

173. Superiority and Manageability: The class litigation is an appropriate method for fair and efficient adjudication of the claims involved. Class action treatment is superior to all other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy alleged herein; it will permit a large number of Class Members to prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously, efficiently, and without the unnecessary duplication of evidence, effort, and expense that hundreds of individual actions would require. Class action treatment will permit the adjudication of relatively modest claims by certain Class Members, who could not individually afford to litigate a complex claim against large corporations, like Defendant. Further, even for those Class Members who could afford to litigate such a claim, it would still be economically impractical and impose a burden on the courts.

174. The nature of this action and the nature of laws available to Plaintiff and Class Members make the use of the class action device a particularly efficient

and appropriate procedure to afford relief to Plaintiff and Class Members for the wrongs alleged because Defendant would necessarily gain an unconscionable advantage since they would be able to exploit and overwhelm the limited resources of each individual Class Member with superior financial and legal resources; the costs of individual suits could unreasonably consume the amounts that would be recovered; proof of a common course of conduct to which Plaintiff was exposed is representative of that experienced by the Class and will establish the right of each Class Member to recover on the cause of action alleged; and individual actions would create a risk of inconsistent results and would be unnecessary and duplicative of this litigation.

175. The litigation of the claims brought herein is manageable. Defendant's uniform conduct, the consistent provisions of the relevant laws, and the ascertainable identities of Class Members demonstrates that there would be no significant manageability problems with prosecuting this lawsuit as a class action.

176. Adequate notice can be given to Class Members directly using information maintained in Defendant's records.

177. Unless a Class-wide injunction is issued, Defendant may continue in its failure to properly secure the Private Information of Class Members, Defendant may continue to refuse to provide proper notification to Class Members regarding the Data Breach, and Defendant may continue to act unlawfully as set forth in this

Complaint.

178. Further, Defendant has acted on grounds that apply generally to the Class as a whole, so that class certification, injunctive relief, and corresponding declaratory relief are appropriate on a class-wide basis.

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

179. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 178, as if fully set forth herein.

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

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

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

183. 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.

184. 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.

185. Defendant had 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.

186. 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.

187. 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.

188. 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 at Defendant.

189. 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.

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

191. 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.

192. 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.

193. Defendant had 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 was 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.

194. 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 remove former patients' Private Information it was no longer required to retain pursuant to regulations,
- g. 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,
- h. Failing to secure its stand-alone personal computers, such as the reception desk computers, even after discovery of the data breach.

195. Defendant violated Section 5 of the FTC Act and HPAAs 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.

196. Plaintiff and Class Members were within the class of persons the Federal Trade Commission Act and HIPAA were intended to protect and the type of harm that resulted from the Data Breach was the type of harm these statutes were intended to guard against.

197. 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.

198. Defendant's violations of Section 5 of the FTC Act and HIPAA constitutes negligence.

199. 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.

200. 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.

201. 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.

202. 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.

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

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

205. 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.

206. 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.

207. 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.

208. 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) experiencing an increase in spam calls, texts, and/or emails; (viii) Plaintiff's Private Information being disseminated on the dark web, according to Google; (ix) statutory damages; (x) nominal damages; and (xi) 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.

209. 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.

210. 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.

211. 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.

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

213. 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)

214. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 178, as if fully set forth herein.

215. Pursuant to the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45, Defendant had a duty to provide fair and adequate computer systems and data security practices to safeguard Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information.

216. 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.

217. Defendant breached its duties to Plaintiff and Class Members under the FTC Act and HIPAA by failing to provide fair, reasonable, or adequate computer systems and data security practices to safeguard Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information.

218. The injuries to Plaintiff and Class Members resulting from the Data breach were directly and indirectly caused by Defendant's violation of the statutes described herein.

219. Plaintiff and Class Members were within the class of persons the Federal Trade Commission Act and HIPAA were intended to protect and the type of harm that resulted from the Data Breach was the type of harm these statutes were intended to guard against.

220. Defendant's failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations constitutes negligence *per se*.

221. But for Defendant's wrongful and negligent breach of their duties owed to Plaintiff and Class Members, Plaintiff and Class Members would not have been injured.

222. The injuries and harms suffered by Plaintiff and Class Members were the reasonably foreseeable result of Defendant's breach of its duties. Defendant knew or should have known that it was failing to meet its duties and that Defendant's breach would cause Plaintiff and Class Members to experience the foreseeable harms associated with the exposure of their Private Information.

223. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligent conduct, Plaintiff and Class Members have suffered injuries and are entitled to compensatory, consequential, and punitive damages in an amount to be proven at trial.

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

224. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 178, as if fully set forth herein.

225. Plaintiff and Class Members were required to provide their Private Information to Defendant as a condition of receiving medical services at Defendant.

226. 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.

227. 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.

228. 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.

229. 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.

230. 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.

231. 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.

232. 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.

233. 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.

234. 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.

235. 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.

236. 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.

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

238. 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.

239. 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.

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

241. 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
Breach of Fiduciary Duty
(On behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

242. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 178, as if fully set forth herein.

243. In light of the special relationship between Defendant and Plaintiff and Class Members, whereby Defendant became guardian of Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information, Defendant became a fiduciary by its undertaking and guardianship of the Private Information, to act primarily for Plaintiff and Class Members, (1) for the safeguarding of their Private Information; (2) to timely notify Plaintiff and Class Members of a Data Breach and disclosure; and (3) to maintain complete and accurate records of what information (and where) Defendant did and does store.

244. Defendant has a fiduciary duty to act for the benefit of Plaintiff and Class Members upon matters within the scope of its relationship with its patients, in particular, to keep secure their Private Information.

245. Defendant has a fiduciary duty to act for the benefit of Plaintiff and Class Members because of the high degree of trust and confidence inherent to the nature of the relationship between Plaintiff and Class Members on the one hand and Defendant on the other, including with respect to their Private Information.

246. Defendant breached its fiduciary duties to Plaintiff and Class Members by failing to diligently discover, investigate, and give notice of the Data Breach in a reasonable and practicable period of time.

247. Defendant breached its fiduciary duties to Plaintiff and Class Members by failing to encrypt and otherwise protect the integrity of the systems containing Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information.

248. Defendant breached its fiduciary duties to Plaintiff and Class Members by otherwise failing to safeguard Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information.

249. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's breaches of its fiduciary duties, 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) experiencing an increase in spam calls, texts, and/or emails; (viii) Plaintiff's Private Information being disseminated on the dark web, according to Google; (ix) statutory damages; (x) nominal damages; and (xi) 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.

250. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's breach of its fiduciary duties, Plaintiff and Class Members have suffered and will continue to suffer other forms of injuries and/or harms, and other economic and non-economic losses.

COUNT V
Unjust Enrichment
(On behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

251. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 178, as if fully set forth herein.

252. This Count is pleaded in the alternative to the breach of implied contract claim above (Count III).

253. Plaintiff and Class Members conferred a monetary benefit on Defendant by paying for services from Defendant and providing Defendant with their valuable Private Information. Defendant accepted and appreciated that benefit.

254. Defendant enriched itself by saving the costs it reasonably should have expended on data security measures to secure Plaintiff's and Class Members' Private Information.

255. Instead of providing a reasonable level of security that would have prevented the Data Breach, Defendant instead calculated to avoid its data security obligations at the expense of Plaintiff and Class Members by utilizing cheaper, ineffective security measures. Plaintiff and Class Members, on the other hand, suffered as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's failure to provide the requisite security.

256. Under the principles of equity and good conscience, Defendant should not be permitted to retain the monetary value of the benefit belonging to Plaintiff and Class Members, because Defendant failed to implement appropriate data management and security measures that are mandated by industry standards.

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

258. If Plaintiff and Class Members knew that Defendant had not secured their Private Information, they would not have agreed to provide their Private Information to Defendant.

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

260. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and Class Members have suffered or 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) experiencing an increase in spam calls, texts, and/or emails; (viii) Plaintiff's Private Information being disseminated on the dark web, according to Google; (ix) statutory damages; (x) nominal damages; and (xi) 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.

261. 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.

262. 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.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff and Class Members respectfully requests judgment against Defendant and that the Court enters an order:

- A. For an order certifying the Class, as defined herein, and appointing Plaintiff and her Counsel to represent the Class;
- B. For equitable relief enjoining Defendant from engaging in the wrongful conduct complained of herein pertaining to the misuse and/or disclosure of the Private Information of Plaintiff and Class Members, and from refusing to issue prompt, complete, any accurate disclosures to Plaintiff and Class Members;
- C. 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 personal identifying 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 employees, with additional training to be provided as appropriate based upon the employees' respective responsibilities with handling personal identifying information,

as well as protecting the personal identifying information of Plaintiff and Class Members;

- xii. requiring Defendant to conduct internal training and education routinely and continually, 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 employees' knowledge of the education programs discussed in the preceding subparagraphs, as well as randomly and periodically testing employees' 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 Private Information to third parties, as well as the steps affected individuals must take to protect Themselves;
- 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;
- D. For an award of damages, including actual, statutory, nominal, and consequential damages, as allowed by law in an amount to be determined;
 - E. For an award of attorneys' fees, costs, and litigation expenses, as allowed by law;
 - F. For prejudgment interest on all amounts awarded; and
 - G. Such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury of all issues so triable.

Dated: February 29, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ David F. Miceli

David F. Miceli (ASB-5691-M-61D)

MILBERG COLEMAN BRYSON

PHILLIPS GROSSMAN PLLC

Post Office Box 2519

Carrollton, GA 30112

Phone: (404) 915-8886

dmiceli@milberg.com

Gary M. Klinger*

MILBERG COLEMAN BRYSON

PHILLIPS GROSSMAN PLLC

227 W. Monroe Street, Suite 2100

Chicago, IL 60606

Phone: (866) 252-0878

gklinger@milberg.com

*Attorneys for Plaintiff and
the Putative Class*

**Pro Hac Vice Forthcoming*

State of Alabama
Unified Judicial System

Form C-34 Rev. 7/2023

SUMMONS
-CIVIL-



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CIRCUIT COURT OF
JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
JACQUELINE ANDERSON SMITH, CLERK

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
(Circuit, District, or Juvenile) (Name of County)

Kim Townsel V. Henderson & Walton Women's Center, P.C.
[Name(s) of Plaintiff(s)] [Name(s) of Defendant(s)]

NOTICE TO: Henderson & Walton Women's Center, P.C., 420 North 20th Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35203
(Name and Address of Defendant)

THE COMPLAINT OR OTHER DOCUMENT WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THIS SUMMONS IS IMPORTANT, AND YOU MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS. YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY ARE REQUIRED TO FILE THE ORIGINAL OF YOUR WRITTEN ANSWER, EITHER ADMITTING OR DENYING EACH ALLEGATION IN THE COMPLAINT OR OTHER DOCUMENT, WITH THE CLERK OF THIS COURT. A COPY OF YOUR ANSWER MUST BE MAILED OR HAND DELIVERED BY YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY TO THE PLAINTIFF(S) OR ATTORNEY(S) OF THE PLAINTIFF(S), David F. Miceli, WHOSE

ADDRESS(ES) IS/ARE: Post Office Box 2519, Carrollton, Georgia 30112
Address(es) of Plaintiff(s) or Attorney(s)

THIS ANSWER MUST BE MAILED OR DELIVERED WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THIS SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT OR OTHER DOCUMENT WERE SERVED ON YOU OR A JUDGMENT BY DEFAULT MAY BE RENDERED AGAINST YOU FOR THE MONEY OR OTHER THINGS DEMANDED IN THE COMPLAINT OR OTHER DOCUMENT.

TO ANY SHERIFF OR ANY PERSON AUTHORIZED BY THE ALABAMA RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE TO SERVE PROCESS:

- [X] You are hereby commanded to serve this Summons and a copy of the Complaint or other document in this action upon the above-named Defendant.
 - [] Service by certified mail of this Summons is initiated upon the written request below of [Name(s)] pursuant to the Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure.
- (Date) (Signature of Clerk) By: (Name)

[] Certified Mail is hereby requested. (Plaintiff's/Attorney's Signature)

RETURN ON SERVICE

Certified Mail
[] Return receipt of certified mail was received in this Office on (Date)

Personal / Authorized
[] I certify that I personally delivered a copy of this Summons and the Complaint or other document to (First and Last Name of Person Served) in (Name of County) County, Alabama on (Date).
Documents left:
[] with above-named Defendant;
[] with an individual authorized to receive service of process pursuant to Rule 4(c), Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure;
[] at the above-named Defendant's dwelling house or place or usual place of abode with some person of suitable age and discretion then residing therein.

Return of Non-Service
[] I certify that service of process of this Summons and the Complaint or other document was refused by (First and Last Name of Person Served) in (Name of County) County, Alabama on (Date) who is:
[] the above-named Defendant;
[] an individual authorized to receive service of process pursuant to Rule 4(c), Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure.

[] As a designated process server pursuant to Rule 4(i)(1)(B), Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure, I certify that I am at least 19 years of age, I am not a party to this proceeding, and I am not related within the third degree by blood or marriage to the party seeking service of process.

(Type of Process Server) (Server's Signature) (Physical Address of Designated Process Server)
(Official Title of Sheriff or Constable) (Server's Printed Name) (Telephone Number of Designated Process Server)
(Badge or Precinct Number of Sheriff or Constable)