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**HIPAA violation leads to prison time**

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Lawyers work hard to convince their clients that HIPAA violations can result in serious fines and even jail time. Although extreme, we finally have our first real life example of how serious the government is about HIPAA privacy rights.

For the first time ever, a man has plead guilty to a HIPAA violation and has been convicted of a crime!

In August, 2004, a Seattle Washington man has pled guilty in federal court to wrongful disclosure of individually identifiable health information (IIHI) for economic gain. The man admitted that he had obtained a patient's name, date of birth, and social security number in the course of his employment in a health care field. He then used the cancer patient's information for the purpose of obtaining credit cards in the patient's name. He will be sentenced to a term of 10 to 16 months in prison and will pay restitution both to the credit card companies and to the victim.

The full press release can be read at:

[http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/waw/press\\_room/2004/aug/gibson.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/waw/press_room/2004/aug/gibson.htm)