

Report on Patient Privacy Volume 19, Number 11. November 07, 2019 Replace Passwords With Biometrics? Experts Say This Isn't Far- Fetched

By Jane Anderson

Health care organizations concerned about credential theft as a route to a major breach may want to consider taking the leap into biometric authentication, which experts say can replace passwords with the verification of physical characteristics that are unique to an individual.

That's the word from Alessandro Chiarini, CEO of Fortress Identity, and Rema Deo, CEO and managing director of 24By7Security Inc., who hosted a recent webinar outlining what biometric authentication can – and can't – do to improve security in the health care industry. Startup Fortress Identity, which has raised \$3 million, sells biometric technologies.

Deo said that biometric authentication can replace multifactor passwords and other barriers to system access for organizations that want to become early adopters. "We know that cybercrime is epidemic," Deo said. "We need to continually up our game to fight cybercrime. It's no longer if but when you are going to be breached in some way or another."

However, while the financial industry has taken somewhat of a lead in using biometric authentication, health care lags behind, Deo said. Retail has been a particular focal point, with various startups and apps using different forms of biometric authentication to allow consumers to shop in unattended stores and check out with just their smartphones.

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