

US Military Health System loses some patient encounter data

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The US Military Health System (MHS) has lost close to 5,000 records relating to patient encounters, due to software and hardware problems. An incorrect database setting resulted in 3,586 records being lost and a hardware issue caused a further 1,400 records to be lost.

According to the Government Health IT website (who also publish Federal Computer Week) almost 5,000 doctor – patient encounter records were lost due to two separate issues at three different sites. Apparently a patch to Local Cache Servers (LCS) that are part of the Armed Forces electronic health record system (AHLTA) caused a problem at two sites. The patch was installed in August at 101 sites, but at two of those sites an incorrect database flag or trigger caused patient record updates not to be stored. The result was 3,586 records were lost. In a separate incident, a Hewlett Packard technician working on a disk RAID array accidentally set something to a default, resulting in the loss of data relating to 1,400 clinical encounters from Fort Hood, Texas. Ultimately the number of records lost from these two incidents is a very small percentage of the total number of records - apparently data on 8.6 million active-duty and retired military personnel and their families is stored by the MHS.

A further worrying factor from a Disaster Recovery perspective is that the Military Health System admit to having problems with the local backup of 2 – 3 Military Treatment Facility (MTF) sites nightly, mainly related to human error (someone forgetting to insert a tape) or actual tape media problems.

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[Government Health IT - Article on data loss of MHS System](#)