How can Payers and Providers Combat Data Breaches?--Video
Kaveh Safavi:

There's been a number of high profile breaches of healthcare information, particularly insurance company's possession of healthcare data. But prior to that, there's been lots of concerns about healthcare information that has been lost or stolen that was owned by hospitals and doctors for example. And I think we have two different sets of issues that are going on here. The first is this expectation that people have that their information is kept private, and only made available to people who need to know it or should know it. That's concept of privacy is really one that's tied much more to the concept of individuals control over their own information.

There is a second related issue, which is the notion of security. Which is even if I have your information, and I promise to use it only in the way that you agree, there is clearly an environment today where people are maliciously trying to steal information. And healthcare is such a treasure trove of information – both personal and financial – that it becomes a really rich target. And that really puts the burden on these organizations. That's a good thing, because the awareness is necessary. Now they're attempting to solve the problem on a couple of levels. The first is: how do I make my information technology systems secure? And the other is: How do I make the information useless, even if it's stolen? So how do I make the data itself secure or encrypted in some fashion? And there is a lot of innovation going on and a lot of adoption of these technologies.

You're seeing organizations struggle with trying to decide whether the best thing they should do is bring the information in and hold it very closely, and defend themselves against attack. Or the alternative hypothesis, which is that the malicious attackers have a level of sophistication that a small organization – or even a large organization – could never have, and that only the largest organizations that deal with this every day will ever be secure. And so there is a paradoxical movement of some organizations – not just healthcare, but other organizations – to say let me actually take advantage of these few institutions that are particularly good at protecting themselves, and let them take care of my information security needs. Cause I'll never be able to do it myself.