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Don't Take the Bait on Phishing Emails

Phishing is a form of fraud in which a malicious attacker attempts to harvest sensitive information from a victim by impersonating a legitimate person, department or organization. Attackers will attempt to gain private data such as account credentials, bank account numbers, personally identifiable information (such as Social Security numbers), or any other information that could prove to be valuable to the attacker. With an uptick in Ransomware attacks that originate through Phishing email, it is crucial for Emerson Health staff to recognize these attempts. Here are some tips to help staff recognize and handle phishing emails:

- ⇒ **Verify the Sender and the Reason for the Email** - A recognizable name is not sufficient. Ask yourself why this email arrived in your inbox and whether it relates to your current work.
- ⇒ **Be Cautious of Emails Without a Personal Greeting** - Legitimate senders know your name. A generic greeting is a warning sign worth taking seriously. Most legitimate senders will also sign their name at the end of the email.
- ⇒ **Treat Unexpected Requests for Action with Skepticism** - Whether it's logging into a website, approving a transaction, or verifying your credentials, pause and question it before proceeding.
- ⇒ **Urgency is a Manipulation Technique** - Phrases like "Act immediately" or "Your account will be suspended" are designed to bypass your judgment. Take a breath and verify first.
- ⇒ **Before Clicking any Link or Opening any Attachment, Answer Two Questions:** - Who sent this? and Why am I receiving it? If you cannot answer both with confidence, do not click a link or open an attachment.
- ⇒ **When Uncertain, Call the Sender Directly** - Use a phone number you already have on file for the sender, and never use the contact details provided in the email itself.

If you have received a suspicious email and feel it could be a phishing attempt, you should report it to the Help Desk by calling 978-287-3447 or emailing helpdesk@emersonhosp.org. The Information Security team will review and provide advice on the next steps.

This information is presented for educational purposes. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Emerson's Chief Information Security Officer at extension 8810.