

Former UCLA Health Worker Pleads Guilty To Accessing Celebrities' Medical Records - Los Angeles News - LA Daily

Former UCLA Healthcare System researcher Huping Zhou has pleaded guilty to violating parts of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and could be one of the first people in the country convicted under the law, federal authorities announced Friday.

After learning he was to be let go, the 48-year-old is alleged to have accessed the UCLA patient records system 323 times during the three-week period, mostly to check out the files of celebrities, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. The names of the targeted stars have not been revealed.

Federal authorities say Zhou admitted to accessing the records -- cruising files that were not necessary to view as part of his job -- under a plea agreement. He'll face a judge for sentencing March 22. It's not clear what kind of punishment the U.S. Attorney's Office will recommend in exchange for his cooperation.

In 2008 another UCLA Medical Center employee, 49-year-old Lawanda Jackson, [pleaded guilty](#) to selling medical-records information to a tabloid. Her targets reportedly included Britney Spears and Farrah Fawcett.

"There is a persistent problem with improper and illegal viewing of medical records by individuals who abuse the access they have as a result of their employment," acting United States Attorney George S. Cardona said. "HIPAA's criminal privacy provisions protect not only celebrities, but all of us from curious neighbors, disgruntled co-workers, and other snoopers."