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Attorney: HCMC employees looked at George Floyd's records without approval - StarTribune.com

MINNEAPOLIS

# Attorneys: HCMC employees looked at George Floyd's private medical records without authorization

Hennepin Healthcare staff looked at records without OK, family's lawyers say.

By **Andy Mannix** (<https://www.startribune.com/andy-mannix/366674391/>) Star Tribune |

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George Floyd's legal team said that employees of Hennepin Healthcare looked at Floyd's private medical records on multiple dates without authorization, which lawyers called a further victimization of a man killed during an encounter with Minneapolis police.

The attorneys say the hospital informed Floyd's family of the data breach via letter, but the hospital would give no further details, including what kind of records were accessed and who accessed them.

The hospital said the workers allegedly involved are "no longer with the organization," but would not say if they left voluntarily or were terminated. The hospital also wouldn't say what positions the employees held.

"When George Floyd was desperate for a breath, the city of Minneapolis pushed on his neck further," reads the statement from the Chicago-based law firm Romanucci & Blandin. "And even after death, he was abused and mistreated by the system. Shameful."

Floyd's death in May at the hands of four Minneapolis police officers touched off protests around the world, raising new scrutiny about police brutality against Black men.

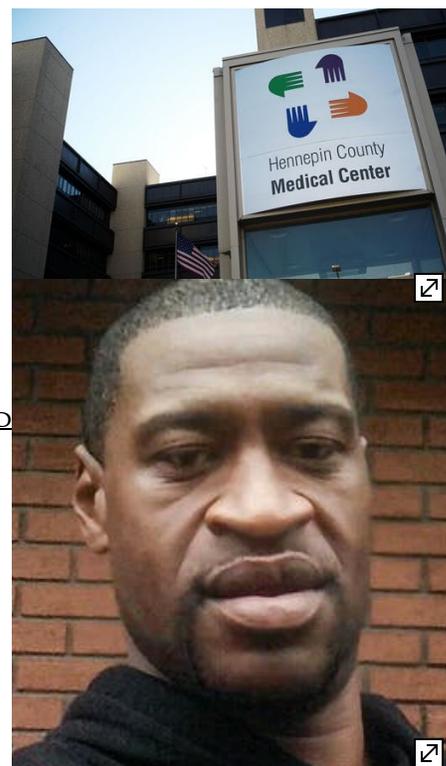
The legal team is exploring all remedies to "make this right and make the family whole for this incredible intrusion of privacy," the statement said. "The security of medical records and personal information is of critical importance in Minnesota and across the country."

The legal team has yet to issue any subpoenas to determine what was accessed. In June, the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office [released the full results of the autopsy](https://www.startribune.com/george-floyd-autopsy-report-released-he-tested-positive-for-covid-19-in-april/571000102/#:~:text=Before%20releasing%20its%20full%20report,disease%2C%E2%80%9D) (<https://www.startribune.com/george-floyd-autopsy-report-released-he-tested-positive-for-covid-19-in-april/571000102/#:~:text=Before%20releasing%20its%20full%20report,disease%2C%E2%80%9D>) performed on Floyd with his family's permission.

The Star Tribune first asked Hennepin Healthcare's communications office for a comment in July, following questions about a potential data breach. The office declined to comment, citing its policy language on patient confidentiality.

Asked for comment again Wednesday, the office invoked the same policy language. It said Hennepin Healthcare regularly conducts privacy audits, and that patients must be notified of breaches.

Floyd, 46, died in police custody May 25 when four Minneapolis police officers arrested him on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill at the Cup Foods convenience store at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in south Minneapolis. Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck for several minutes as he pleaded to breathe and bystanders begged Chauvin and three other officers to stop. Chauvin is charged with second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in Floyd's death. Three other officers, Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao are charged with aiding and abetting murder and manslaughter. All four have been fired.



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George Floyd

**Andy Mannix** covers federal courts and law enforcement for the Star Tribune. He joined the paper in January 2016 and previously covered Minneapolis City Hall and statewide criminal justice/Department of Corrections.

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