**How RadComp Uses and Protects Study Participant's Social Security Numbers**

Participants' social security numbers (SSN) are collected when they first join the study. With ever growing concerns in the present day over the protection of personal data, we want to inform you of the purpose, use, and protection of RadComp participants' social security numbers. Much of the following information has been previously detailed to all participants, by law, during the Informed Consent process.

**What is the purpose of collecting SSN?**

The primary research goal of RadComp is to determine the effectiveness of proton vs. photon therapy in reducing major cardiovascular events (health complications related to the heart) and how treatment affects patient's quality of life. Since cardiovascular events may not occur until many years after patients receive radiation, we collect participants' SSN to verify how many people are alive at least 10 years after radiation. While we make every effort to keep our contact information for participants and their back up contact information current, if we lose contact for any reason we will be able to use the SSN to search national records to determine if a participant is still alive.

**How are SSNs protected?**

The RadComp Study adheres to strict federal regulations that require all information that can identify a participant to be kept confidential, as per Good Clinical Practice guidelines. SSNs are secured in a research database housed at the University of Pennsylvania (location of RadComp's Coordinating Center) in RadComp's "Secure Portal." The RadComp Secure Portal was developed to capture sensitive personal information for subjects enrolled in the study. The portal is password protected and only authorized users of the study are allowed access.

Secure Portal users must adhere to strict data security protocols set out by RadComp, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), and the University of Pennsylvania's Institutional Review Board, when using the database. As an additional measure of protection, within the portal, social security numbers are separated from other personally identifiable information. Furthermore, the Penn Medicine's healthcare network maintains digital security systems, such as "fire walls," or digital walls which stand between protected health data and malware that seeks to obtain private information. Taken together, these measures ensure participants' social security numbers are protected.

**Questions or concerns?**

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