Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 5, 2023

Mr. Jeff Karberg
Maryland Office of the Attorney General
200 Saint Paul Place
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

via email: jkarberg@oag.state.md.us

Re: Maryland Department of Health Notice pursuant to Maryland State Government Article §10-1305(h).

Mr. Karberg:

On December 15, 2023, the Office of Internal Controls, Audit Compliance & Information Security (IAC/S) was notified by the Harford County Health Department's (HCHD) Health Officer, of a potential Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) violation at the HCHD. The breach occurred on or about March 16, 2020 through December 15, 2023.

During this time, HCHD's clients' PHI was transferred from HCHD's electronic medical records system to an HCHD consultant's private office's electronic health records system to write prescriptions. This was done without the clients' signed authorization. The PHI includes the client's name, date of birth, address, height/weight, and insurance information. It is also possible that if a parent was the primary insured that the parent's name, date of birth, address, social security number, and insurance information was also transferred. It is unclear who transferred the data, how the data was transferred, and how many individuals at the consultant's private office have/had access to HCHD's clients' PHI.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Hoffman
Health Policy Analyst
Maryland Department of Health
Office of Internal Controls, Audit Compliance & Information Security
201 West Preston Street - 5th fl.
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

To the parent or guardian of :

The Harford County Health Department is writing to notify you of a privacy incident that involves your child's personal information.

What happened: A consultant at the Harford County Health Department (the Department) transferred your child's health records to their private office without signed authorization.

What Information was involved: The personal information involved was the client's name, address, date of birth, height/weight, and insurance information. If a parent is the primary insured, the parent's name, date of birth, address, social security number, and insurance information may also be involved.

What the Harford County Health Department is doing: The consultant is no longer employed by the Department.

What you can do: We have no reason to believe that the impacted health information is being used to steal your identity. However, if you are concerned, you can find information on actions you can take to protect yourself on the websites of the Maryland Attorney General, Division of Consumer Protection (https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/IdentityTheft/default.aspx) and the Federal Trade Commission (http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft//). We will tell you if we receive any more information that shows your credit or identity may be at risk.

For more information: If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me by email or by telephone. The contact information is listed below. The Harford County Health Department is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information and we apologize for any inconvenience or concerns this incident may have caused.

Sincerely,

(toll free number)
(email address)

Additional Steps You May Wish to Take:

COPY OF CREDIT REPORT: You may obtain a free copy of your credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies once every 12 months by visiting https://www.annualcreditreport.com, calling toll-free 877-322-8228, or by completing an Annual Credit Report Request Form and mailing it to the Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281. You can print this form at https://www.annualcreditreport.com/manualRequestForm.action. Credit reporting agency contact details are provided below.

Equifax
P.O. Box 740241
Atlanta, GA 30374
1-866-349-5191
www.equifax.com

Experian
P.O. Box 2002
Allen, TX 75013
1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com

TransUnion
P.O. Box 1000
Chester, PA 19016
1-800-680-7289
www.transunion.com

When you receive your credit reports, review them carefully. Look for accounts or credit inquiries that you did not initiate or do not recognize. Look for information, such as home address and Social Security number, that is inaccurate. If you see anything you do not understand, call the credit reporting agency at the telephone number on the report.

FRAUD ALERT: You may want to consider placing a fraud alert on your credit file. An initial fraud alert is free and will stay on your credit file for at least 90 days. The alert informs creditors of possible fraudulent activity within your report and requests that the creditor contact you prior to establishing any accounts in your name. If you have already been a victim of identity theft, you may have an extended alert placed on your report if you provide the appropriate documentary proof. An extended fraud alert stays on your credit report for seven years. To place a fraud alert on your credit report, contact any of the three credit reporting agencies identified above.

SECURITY FREEZE: You have the ability to place a security freeze on your credit report at no charge. A security freeze is designed to prevent credit, loans, and services from being approved in your name without your consent but may delay your ability to obtain credit. To place a security freeze, you must contact each of the three credit bureaus listed above and may be required to provide your full name; SSN; date of birth; the addresses where you have lived over the past five years; proof of current address, such as a utility bill or telephone bill; a copy of a government issued identification card; and if you are the victim of identity theft, the police report, investigative report, or complaint to a law enforcement agency.

- The credit reporting agencies have three (3) business days after receiving your request to place a security freeze on your credit report. The credit bureaus must also send written confirmation to you within five (5) business days and provide you with a unique personal identification number (PIN) or password, or both that can be used by you to authorize the removal or lifting of the security freeze.

- To remove the security freeze, you must contact each of the three credit bureaus and include proper identification (name, address, and social security number) and the PIN number or password provided to you when you placed the security freeze. The credit bureaus have three (3) business days after receiving your request to remove the security freeze.

FEDERAL FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT RIGHTS: The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) is federal legislation that regulates how consumer reporting agencies use your information. Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act: The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. There are many types of consumer reporting agencies, including credit bureaus and specialty agencies (such as agencies that sell information about check writing histories, medical records, and rental history records). Your major rights under the FCRA are summarized below. For more information, including information about additional rights, go to www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore or write to: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G Street N.W., Washington, DC 20552. 1) You must be told if information in your file has been used against you. 2) You have the right to know what is in your file. 3) You have the right to ask for a credit score. 4) You have the right to dispute incomplete or inaccurate information. 5) Consumer reporting agencies must correct or delete inaccurate, incomplete, or unverifiable information. 6) Consumer reporting agencies may not report outdated negative information. 7) Access to your file is limited. 8) You must give your consent for reports to be provided to employers. 9) You may limit "prescreened" offers of credit and insurance you get based on information in your credit report. 10) You have a right to place a "security freeze" on your credit report, which will prohibit a consumer reporting agency from releasing information in your credit report without your express authorization. 11) You may seek damages from violators. 12) Identity theft victims and active duty military personnel have additional rights.

REVIEW YOUR CREDIT REPORTS AND ACCOUNT STATEMENTS; NOTIFY LAW ENFORCEMENT OF SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY: As a precautionary measure, we recommend that you remain vigilant by reviewing your credit reports and account statements closely. If you detect any suspicious activity on an account, you should promptly notify the financial institution or company with which the account is maintained. You also should promptly report any fraudulent activity or any suspected incidents of identity theft to proper law enforcement authorities. If you believe you are the victim of identity theft or have reason to believe your personal information has been misused, you should immediately contact law enforcement, the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") and/or the Attorney General's office in your home state. You can also contact these agencies for information on how to prevent or avoid identity theft. You can contact the FTC at:

Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580
www.ftc.gov/IDTHEFT
1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338)

Maryland: *You may contact and obtain information from your state attorney general at: Maryland Attorney General's Office, Identity Theft Unit, 200 St. Paul Place, 25th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202, 1-410-576-6491,1-888-743-0023, idtheft@oag.state.md.us, www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov*

Virginia: *You may contact and obtain information from your state attorney general at: Office of the Attorney General, Victim Notification Program, 202 North Ninth Street, Richmond, VA 23219, 1-804-786-2071, VPN@oag.state.va.us,* www.oag.state.va.us

West Virginia: *You may contact and obtain information from your state attorney general at: State Capitol Complex Bldg. 1, Rm E-26, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. E, Charleston, WV 25305, 1-800-368-8808, consumer@wvago.gov ,* www.wvago.gov

Massachusetts: *You may contact and obtain information from your state attorney general at: Office of Attorney General, Consumer Advocacy & Response Division, 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, 1-617-727-8400, https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-consumer-complaint*