LAC DMH
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
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MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.
Director

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BREACH NOTIFICATION

December 1, 2014

Dear Clients of the Specialized Foster Care Program:

We believe that acting responsibly is an integral part of our commitment to delivering the best possible services to the citizens of Los Angeles County. As such, we wish to inform you that on October 8, 2014, we became aware that some of your protected health information (PHI) was stored in an unauthorized location. We believe this occurred because an employee of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's (LACDMH) Specialized Foster Care Program stored an unmarked box containing PHI outside of our secure facility during a work relocation and inadvertently failed to transfer it to the intended work site.

The unmarked box contained referral forms and some progress notes containing personal information which may include your name, phone number, address, date of birth, social security number, Medi-Cal number, dates of services, diagnosis codes, and treatment notes. This activity is a violation of LACDMH policies and procedures and the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule.

After we learned of the incident, we counseled and retrained the employee regarding LACDMH's policies and procedures applicable to HIPAA regulations. Additionally, we attempted to personally contact those affected in this matter through the U.S. Postal Service. However, some of our affected clients may not have received our letter; therefore, we are providing this web posting.

If you were a Department of Children and Family Services client who was referred to LACDMH for Specialized Foster Care services in 2010, 2011, and 2012, please contact our HIPAA Privacy Unit at our toll-free number, 1-855-700-8123, to verify whether your information was contained in the impacted documents.

Although we do not have any indication that any of the client information was or may be used for identity theft, we encourage you to take steps to protect yourself from fraud. Federal law allows consumers one free credit report each year from each of the three (3) national credit bureaus: Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. You have the option of requesting all three (3) reports at the same time or requesting them individually, at different times throughout the year.

Their contact information is as follows:

Experian
P.O. Box 9532
Allen, TX 75013
(888) 397-3742
www.experian.com

TransUnion
P.O. Box 6790
Fullerton, CA 92834-6790
(800) 680-7289
www.transunion.com

Equifax
P.O. Box 740241
Atlanta, GA 30374-0241
(800) 525-6285
www.equifax.com

For additional information about protecting yourself against identity theft, visit the Los Angeles Department of Consumer Affairs' website, http://dca.lacounty.gov.

If you find out that your information has been misused, or that an account has been falsely created using your identity, you should contact your local law enforcement agency and your personal bank(s) and credit card provider(s).

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience or concerns this incident may have caused you. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact us on our toll-free number at 1-855-700-8123.

Sincerely,

Ginger Fong

Ginger Fong
HIPAA Privacy Officer
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
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