



## **SUBSTITUTE NOTICE OF DATA BREACH**

### **In compliance with federal and State laws, this provides substitute notice**

This is an announcement regarding a phishing attack against the County of Los Angeles, Department of Health Service (“DHS”) that may affect the privacy of some personally identifiable and/or health information of certain DHS patients. DHS is taking this incident seriously and we are working and cooperating with law enforcement on this matter.

### **What Happened**

Between February 19, 2024, and February 20, 2024, DHS experienced a phishing attack. Specifically, a hacker was able to gain log-in credentials of 23 DHS employees through a phishing e-mail. A phishing e-mail tries to trick recipients into giving up important information. In this case, the DHS employees clicked on the link located in the body of the e-mail, thinking that they were accessing a legitimate message from a trustworthy sender.

Due to the ongoing investigation by law enforcement, we were advised to delay notification of this incident until now, as public notice may have hindered their investigation.

### **What Information Was Involved?**

The information identified in the potentially compromised e-mail accounts included the first and last name of the impacted individuals, and may have included date of birth, home address, phone number(s), e-mail address, medical record number, client identification number, dates of service, and/or medical information (e.g., diagnosis/condition, treatment, test results, medications), and/or health plan information. The information did not include Social Security Numbers (SSN) or financial information.

Affected individuals may have been impacted differently and not all of the elements listed were present for each individual.

### **What We Are Doing**

DHS has implemented numerous enhancements to reduce our exposure to similar e-mail attacks in the future. Upon discovery of the phishing attack, we acted swiftly to disable the impacted e-mail accounts, reset and re-imaged the users' device(s), blocked websites that were identified as part of the phishing campaign, and quarantined all suspicious incoming e-mails. Additionally, awareness notifications were distributed to all DHS workforce members to remind them to be vigilant when reviewing e-mails, especially those including links or attachments. Law enforcement was notified upon discovery of the phishing attack, and they investigated the incident.

We also initiated an administrative review and implemented additional controls to minimize the risk of future phishing e-mail attacks against DHS. Further, we enhanced training to identify and respond to phishing attacks as part of the DHS' ongoing cyber-security awareness program.

In addition to notifying individuals potentially impacted by this incident, we will notify the California Department of Public Health, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office for Civil Rights, and other agencies as required by law and/or contract.

We are seeking to stay ahead of the rapidly evolving and continuous threats to large data systems. DHS remains vigilant in its efforts to protect confidential information and continues to strengthen its information privacy and security program to implement safeguards to prevent and/or reduce cyber-attacks.

### **What You Can Do**

While DHS cannot confirm that information has been accessed or misused, we encourage patients to review the content and accuracy of the information in their medical record with their medical provider. Although the information potentially compromised did not contain SSNs or financial information, affected individuals may review the "Steps You Can Take to Protect Against Identity Theft and Fraud" posted on <https://dhs.lacounty.gov>.

### **For More Information**

We understand there may be additional questions about this incident and have established a dedicated call center available toll free in the U.S. at 1 (866) 528-2114, from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time (excluding weekends and major U.S. holidays). Affected individuals may also visit the following website for more information: <https://dhs.lacounty.gov>.