

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY HIPAA NOTICE OF DATA SECURITY INCIDENT**

### **March 26, 2024**

Washington County (the “County”) has determined there had been unauthorized access and acquisition of protected health information stored on our computer network related to individuals served by the Washington County Department of Human Services and related agencies, as a result of the recent ransomware attack. We take this matter very seriously because of our commitment to the privacy and security of all information. We are providing this notice to inform potentially impacted individuals and suggest ways that individuals can protect their information.

### **What Happened**

On January 24, 2024, the County responded to a ransomware attack on its computer network. We immediately began working with a nationally recognized digital forensics team to secure our network and investigate the scope of the incident and alerted federal law enforcement. Through our investigation of this incident, we determined that the cyber criminals accessed our network between January 13 and January 24, 2024. We also learned that prior to the County’s discovery of the attack, the cyber criminals took data from our network. On January 26, 2024 we discovered for the first time that data stolen from our network contained protected health information. Once we learned this, we began a thorough review of the contents of the identified data to establish what information may have been involved, who may have been affected, and where those people reside so that we could provide notice. Although the review is ongoing, we are providing this website notification, HIPAA (45 CFR § 164.404(d)(2)), while we thoroughly analyze the data. Upon completing our review, we will provide required written notice to individuals and will offer complimentary credit monitoring services where appropriate.

### **What Information Was Involved**

At this time, we have determined the data may contain the following types of information: name, address, Social Security numbers, date of birth, diagnosis information, treatment information, medical record identifier, dates of service, medication information, and health insurance information including health insurance carrier and group number.

### **What We Are Doing About It**

As soon as we learned about this incident, we immediately worked with our team to secure our network and begin an investigation. We have notified the Washington County District Attorney and continue to cooperate with federal law enforcement’s investigation. Washington County took steps to prevent County data from being published on the Dark Web and our investigators have not found any indication that data impacted by this incident has been released or offered for sale on the Dark Web. To further enhance our security and to help prevent similar occurrences in the future, we have taken or will be taking the following steps:

1. Reviewed and updated firewall rules;
2. Deployed an endpoint detection and response solution across our full network;
3. Reviewed and closed unnecessary remote access routes;
4. Changed all passwords; and
5. Enrolled all users in multi-factor authentication.

Additionally, the County will be providing notice of this incident to the United States Department of Health and Human Services and to all appropriate state regulators.

### **What You Can Do**

We recommend that you take the following preventative measures to help protect your information:

1. Remain vigilant for incidents of fraud and identity theft by regularly reviewing your account statements, free credit reports, and any health insurance Explanation of Benefits (EOB) forms for unauthorized or suspicious activity. Information on additional ways to protect your information, including how to obtain a free credit report and free security freeze, can be found at the end of this notice.
2. Report any incidents of suspected identity theft to your local law enforcement, state Attorney General and the major credit bureaus.

### **For More Information**

Please accept our apologies that this incident occurred. We remain fully committed to maintaining the privacy of personal information in our possession and will continue to take many precautions to safeguard it. If you have any questions or concerns about this incident, you may contact us at 1-888-271-9483, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

## MORE INFORMATION ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT AND WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Visit <https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/category/fraud-and-identity-theft/> for general information regarding identity protection. You can obtain additional information about fraud alerts, security freezes, and preventing identity theft from the consumer reporting agencies listed below and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) by calling its identity theft hotline: 877-438-4338; TTY: 1-866-653-4261. They also provide information online at <https://consumer.ftc.gov/features/identity-theft>. The FTC's address is: Federal Trade Commission, Division of Privacy and Identity Protection, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580. You have the ability to place a security freeze on your credit reports by contacting the following agencies.

### National Credit Reporting Agencies Contact Information

<b>Equifax</b> P.O. Box 105788 Atlanta, GA 30348 1-888-298-0045 <a href="http://www.equifax.com">www.equifax.com</a>	<b>Experian</b> P.O. Box 9554 Allen, TX 75013 1-888-397-3742 <a href="http://www.experian.com">www.experian.com</a>	<b>TransUnion</b> P.O. Box 160 Woodlyn, PA 19094 1-800-916-8800 <a href="http://www.transunion.com">www.transunion.com</a>
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### Obtain Your Credit Report

You should also monitor your credit reports. You may periodically obtain your credit reports from each of the national consumer reporting agencies. In addition, under federal law, you are entitled to one free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each of the three nationwide consumer reporting agencies listed above. You may obtain a free copy of your credit report by going to [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com) or by calling (877) 322-8228. You also may complete the Annual Credit Report Request Form available from the FTC at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/sites/www.consumer.ftc.gov/files/articles/pdf/pdf-0093-annual-report-request-form.pdf> and mail it to Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281. You may also contact any of the three major consumer reporting agencies to request a copy of your credit report. You may be able to obtain one or more (depending on the state) additional copies of your credit report, free of charge. You must contact each of the credit reporting agencies directly.

If you discover inaccurate information or a fraudulent transaction on your credit report, you have the right to request that the consumer reporting agency delete that information from your credit report file.

### Fraud Alerts

You may want to consider placing a fraud alert on your credit report. An initial fraud alert is free and will stay on your credit file for one year. The alert informs creditors of possible fraudulent activity within your report and requests that the creditor contact you prior to establishing any new accounts in your name. To place a fraud alert on your credit report, contact any of the three national credit reporting agencies using the contact information listed above. As soon as one credit bureau confirms the fraud alert, they will notify the others. Additional information is available at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).

### Security Freeze

You have the ability to place a security freeze on your credit report at no cost to you. A security freeze is intended to prevent credit, loans and services from being approved in your name without your consent. To place a security freeze on your credit report, you may be able to use an online process, an automated telephone line,

or a written request to all three of the credit reporting agencies listed above. The following information must be included when requesting a security freeze (note that if you are requesting a credit report for your spouse, this information must be provided for him/her as well): (1) full name, with middle initial and any suffixes; (2) Social Security number; (3) date of birth; (4) current address and any previous addresses for the past five years; (5) a legible copy of a government-issued identification card, (6) proof of current address, such as a legible copy of a recent utility bill or bank or insurance statement, (7) a legible copy of a recent W-2, pay stub, or Social Security card, and (8) if you are a victim of identity theft, a copy of either the police report, investigative report, or complaint to a law enforcement agency concerning identity theft. It is essential that each copy be legible, display your name and current mailing address, and the date of issue. **Under federal law, you cannot be charged to place, lift, or remove a security freeze.**

After receiving your freeze request, each credit reporting company will send you a confirmation letter containing a unique PIN (personal identification number) or password. Keep the PIN or password in a safe place, you will need it if you choose to lift the freeze.

### **Protecting Your Medical Information**

We have no information to date indicating that your medical information involved in this incident was or will be used for any unintended purposes. As a general matter, however, the following practices can help to protect you from medical identity theft.

- Only share your health insurance cards with your health care providers and other family members who are covered under your insurance plan or who help you with your medical care.
- Review your “explanation of benefits statement” which you receive from your health insurance company. Follow up with your insurance company or care provider for any items you do not recognize. If necessary, contact the care provider on the explanation of benefits statement and ask for copies of medical records from the date of the potential access (noted above) to current date.
- Ask your insurance company for a current year-to-date report of all services paid for you as a beneficiary. Follow up with your insurance company or the care provider for any items you do not recognize.

### **Additional Helpful Information**

Even if you do not find any suspicious activity on your initial credit reports, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommends that you check your credit reports periodically. Checking your credit report periodically can help you spot problems and address them quickly.

If you find suspicious activity on your credit reports or have reason to believe your information is being misused, call your local law enforcement agency and file a police report. Be sure to obtain a copy of the police report, as many creditors will want the information it contains to absolve you of the fraudulent debts. You may also file a complaint with the FTC by contacting them at the information provided above. This notice was not delayed as a result of a law enforcement investigation.

If your personal information has been used to file a false tax return, to open an account or to attempt to open an account in your name, or to commit fraud or other crimes against you, you may file a police report in the city in which you currently reside.