



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

20 W 12th St, St Paul, MN 55155
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MinnesotaVeteran.org • 1-888-LinkVet

Notice Regarding Breach of Protected Health Information held by Affinity Health Services (AHS)

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) takes seriously its responsibility to protect information about the Veterans we serve. A former MDVA contractor, Affinity Health Services, that provided services to MDVA in at least the years of 2009 through 2011, experienced a network security incident on **April 24, 2023**. This notice is intended to alert potentially impacted individuals of the incident, steps AHS and MDVA are taking in response, and resources available to assist and protect individuals.

What Happened: On April 24, 2023, Affinity Health Services (AHS), the former MDVA contractor, experienced an extensive data security issue with its AHS network resources disrupted and its files, including the files of its consulting clients like MDVA, encrypted by an outside entity. AHS stated that it immediately responded to this serious data security incident and launched a forensic investigation conducted by a third-party forensic specialist to determine the scope of data potentially impacted. This investigation included determining whether any protected health information (PHI) or personally identifiable information (PII) may have been affected by the AHS data security incident. On November 3, 2023, AHS concluded their forensic investigation and electronic discovery, determining that an unauthorized third party *may* have accessed certain individuals' personal information during the incident. As of November 2023, AHS had not received any reports of misuse of information and/or related identity theft since the date the incident was discovered by AHS on April 24, 2023.

On November 27, 2023, MDVA received a notice in the mail from AHS, first alerting MDVA to the data security incident issues that AHS had experienced in April 2023. MDVA worked with AHS to obtain a list of the potentially impacted MDVA residents or former MDVA residents. Although AHS is providing written notice to impacted individuals, **MDVA itself provided notice to individuals MDVA was able to confirm were MDVA residents or former MDVA residents if MDVA had contact information for the individuals or contact information for the responsible party for the individuals.**

What Information Was Involved: AHS had provided extensive Medicare certification financial analysis review for MDVA. To perform this work, per AHS, AHS was provided resident names and personally identifiable information, with data elements including the following: **Resident first and last names, Resident addresses, Medicare numbers, date of birth (DOB), medical record numbers, social security number, and other protected health information including diagnosis information and health conditions;** this information was needed to determine reimbursement levels from federal healthcare payors.

If you have questions on whether you are impacted:

If you have questions on the incident, you may reach out for more information directly to AHS at their

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following email address: incidentresponse@affinityhealthservices.net. **AHS has also set up a call center to answer questions about the incident, and you can obtain more information about the incident by calling the AHS call center: 1-844-360-3558, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 8:00 pm ET, excluding holidays. AHS should have more information about risk mitigation and complimentary services available to all potentially impacted individuals** at no cost to them through AHS: please call the AHS call center to learn more.

Precautionary Measures: If you would like to take precautionary measures, under federal law, you have the right to receive, a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each of the three consumer credit reporting companies. A credit report can provide information about those who have received your credit history within a certain period of time. You may request it online at annualcreditreport.com or by telephone at 1-877-322-8228.

If you have any other questions, please e-mail us at: dpc0.mdva@state.mn.us.

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