



## *Oakland Family Services Information Breach FAQs*

### **1. What happened?**

An unauthorized individual remotely gained access to the email account of one Oakland Family Services employee July 14, 2015 resulting in the potential viewing of protected health information (PHI). However, there was no infiltration of the electronic medical record databases, or any other agency email accounts or databases. The unauthorized access was discovered by Oakland Family Services that same day, when it was determined the employee's email account was fraudulently accessed as part of a phishing attempt. Phishing is an attempt to acquire sensitive information, such as usernames and passwords, utilizing emails that masquerade as those from a trustworthy entity.

### **2. Am I affected?**

We do not believe that any PHI was looked at or downloaded. We were able to determine that the unauthorized person was in the account for only 23 minutes. We also know that they created and sent a phishing email to all of the host's email contacts while they were in the employee's email account. No other Oakland Family Services employee responded to the phishing email. However, based on the amount of time the unauthorized user was in the account and the time it would take to create and send the phishing email, we are very confident that none of the PHI was accessed. The unauthorized access was discovered on the day it occurred and swift action was taken to prevent further access by this user.

### **3. What information of mine was potentially accessed?**

If you received mental health or substance abuse treatment at Oakland Family Services between 2007 and 2010, there is a very low likelihood that any information other than your first name, last initial and client ID number was contained in an email or viewed by the unauthorized individual. There is a small potential that full name, dates of service, type of service, diagnosis and date of birth may have been present. If your social security number was present, you would have received a letter indicating that from Oakland Family Services. If you received mental health or substance abuse treatment at Oakland Family Services between 2011 and July 14, 2015, it is most likely your name, address, program and type of service were contained in an email attachment. If your social security number was present, you would have received a letter indicating that. If your child was a client in the Specialized Services for Youth program and had information contained in an email, the specific type of information was included in a letter sent to you.

### **4. How did this happen?**

This was a case of a phishing scam. Phishing is an attempt to acquire sensitive information, such as usernames and passwords, utilizing emails that masquerade as those from a trustworthy entity. The goal is to obtain the person's password to credit card and bank accounts.

**5. Why did it take so long to notify me?**

Oakland Family Services responded to its clients and the public as soon as possible. Staff had to do a complex investigation to learn what kind of information was contained in the email account and whose information it was. There were more than 60,000 emails to search through. A tool called Identify Finder was used to identify any social security numbers that were contained in the emails. There were only 173 social security numbers out of over 16,000 people. Because there were more than 16,000 individuals involved, we have retained an outside company to manage the notifications and assist clients in addressing the situation.

**6. Was the information password-protected?**

Yes. However, the password itself was obtained through a phishing scam.

**7. Was the information encrypted?**

Yes. However, because the hacker had the email account password the fact that the emails were encrypted did not prevent access.

**8. Was this incident reported to law enforcement?**

No, there is no evidence that any information was stolen. However, out of an abundance of caution, Oakland Family Services felt it was necessary to notify you.

**9. Who is Oakland Family Services? I have never heard of you?**

Oakland Family Services is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) human service organization. Since 1921, Oakland Family Services has been dedicated to strengthening families by providing quality treatment, education and prevention services throughout SE Michigan. If you received a letter, we believe you or your child received services from Oakland Family Services.

**10. Why do you have my information?**

If you received a letter, we believe you or your child received services from Oakland Family Services.

**11. Is Oakland Family Services reporting to any state agencies or regulators?/ Is Oakland Family Services reporting to anyone else besides affected individuals?**

Oakland Family Services has reported the incident to the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services. They will do a full investigation and Oakland Family Services will fully comply with all state and federal laws.

**12. The letter says my information may have been affected; was it taken or viewed?/Does accessed mean my information was taken or viewed?**

We do not believe that any information was taken or viewed. We were able to determine that the unauthorized person was in the account for 23 minutes. We also know that s/he created and sent a phishing email to all of the host's email contacts while they were in there. However, based on the amount of time the unauthorized user was in the account and the time it would take to create and send the phishing email, we are very confident that none of the PHI was accessed. The unauthorized access was discovered on the day it occurred and swift action was taken to prevent further access by this user.

**13. Is this a HIPAA violation?**

Yes, we believe that this was likely a breach, based on the fact that the PHI in the emails was accessible to the hacker, even though we don't believe it was viewed or downloaded.

**14. Is this a scam?**

No. This notification is legitimate and required by law. However, this was a case of a phishing scam. Phishing is an attempt to acquire sensitive information, such as usernames and passwords, utilizing emails that masquerade as those from a trustworthy entity. The goal is to obtain the person's password to credit card and bank accounts.

**15. What could the information of mine that may have been affected be used for?**

We do not believe there was any information taken. However, based on the information present in the emails, there will be very little use if there was no social security number present. Without a social security number, they likely could not perpetuate financial fraud such as get credit in your name.

**16. Am I the only one this happened to?/ How many people are affected?**

We believe that about 16,000 individuals were potentially affected. However, only 173 individuals' social security numbers were included in the emails.

**17. Can I obtain a copy of the police report?**

A police report was not made, as explained above in #8.

**18. Is my information secure now?**

Yes. Emails older than 6 months in the hacked email account are archived, which means that they are no longer accessible in the email account but on a secure server. All staff have been trained in how to avoid phishing scams. The staff whose email was hacked holds a position that involves having an unusual amount of PHI in their email. This staff is now using Multi-factor Authentication, which means that the email could not be accessed with only the password.

**19. Is Oakland Family Services offering affected members access to free credit or identity monitoring services?**

Yes. Individuals whose social security number was included in one or more emails are being offered one year free membership in Experian's ProtectMyID, which is an Identity Theft Protection service and includes

access to free credit and identity monitoring services. If you are one of these people, you would have received a letter with an activation code and instructions on how to enroll.

**20. What type of identity theft protection is being offered?**

Individuals whose social security number was included in one or more emails are being offered Experian's ProtectMyID. This is an Identity Theft Protection service that includes access to free credit and identity monitoring services.

**21. Does this mean I am a victim of identity/health care theft, health care fraud, or other fraud?**

No. It only means your information may have been in an email that was accessible to the hacker. However, we do not believe that any information was taken or viewed. We were able to determine that the unauthorized person was in the account for 23 minutes. We also know that they created and sent a phishing email to all of the host's email contacts while they were in there. However, based on the amount of time the unauthorized user was in the account and the time it would take to create and send the phishing email, we are very confident that none of the PHI was accessed. Out of an abundance of caution we are taking these additional steps to provide you with notification and assistance to respond to any potential consequences of the access.

**22. Has there been any reports of misuse?**

None.

**23. What is identity theft/medical identity theft?**

Identity theft is the illegal use of someone's personal information (such as a social security number) in order to obtain money or credit.

**24. What Should I do if I discover I am a victim of identity theft?**

Notify us and each of your financial institutions, banks, and credit reporting agencies.

**25. I received a letter stating that my social security number was included in one or more emails. What additional steps should I consider taking to protect my identity?**

Please consider placing a "fraud alert" on your credit reports and accounts. You may wish to enroll in one of the services provided by our partner, Experian, by visiting the ProtectMyID website: [www.protectmyid.com/enroll](http://www.protectmyid.com/enroll). Your activation code is contained in the letter you received.

**26. I received a letter stating that my social security number was included in one or more emails. There are fraudulent charges on my bank account and/or credit/debit card. What do I do?**

Notify your bank, credit card issuer, and the credit reporting agencies immediately. You may wish to enroll in one of the services provided by our partner, Experian, by visiting the ProtectMyID website: [www.protectmyid.com/enroll](http://www.protectmyid.com/enroll). Your activation code is contained in the letter you received.

**27. I received a letter stating that my social security number was include in one or more emails. Even if I have not been the victim of identity theft, medical identity theft, or fraud, what can I do to protect myself against identity theft or fraud?**

Please consider placing a “fraud alert” on your credit reports and accounts. You may wish to enroll in one of the services provided by our partner, Experian, by visiting the ProtectMyID website: [www.protectmyid.com/enroll](http://www.protectmyid.com/enroll). Your activation code is contained in the letter you received.

**28. What is Oakland Family Services doing to prevent this from happening again?**

The password of the hacked email account was changed the same day the incident occurred. All Oakland Family Services staff were instructed to change their email password. A system was set up to force staff to change their passwords every three months. All staff have been trained in how to maintain email security and avoid phishing scams. The IT department is in the process of moving staff to an email system that will automatically archive emails older than 6 months, which means that they are no longer accessible in the email account but will be housed on a secure server. The IT department is in the process of moving staff to Multi-factor Authentication, which means that email accounts cannot be accessed with only the email password.

**29. I received a letter. Will I be notified if there are any updates?**

Yes, if Oakland Family Services receives any new information about the incident, we will notify affected individuals.

**30. I am with the media and would like additional information.**

Visit Oakland Family Services website to see the press release or call Kathryn Ribant-Payne, Director of Marketing and Communications, (248) 858-7733 ext 266.