State of California—Health and Human Services Agency

Department of Health Services

California Department of Health Services

DIANA M. BONTÁ, R.N., Dr. P.H.
Director

GRAY DAVIS
Governor

August 19, 2003

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

Letter No.: 03-44

SUBJECT: DISTRIBUTION OF THE HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES TO MEDI-CAL ELIGIBLES

As described in All County Letter No. 03-18, dated April 21, 2003, the Department of Health Services (DHS) sent out a Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP) to all Medi-Cal recipient households, as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Final Privacy Rule.

Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) is working on a computer program that will be used to identify new eligibles on the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) database in order for DHS to mail a NPP to the new eligibles. The estimated date for this process to be in place is mid-October, 2003. However, it may take longer than that before the programming is completed and a mailing process established.

DHS is concerned that new Medi-Cal enrollees are not receiving this important information, which is mandated by law. Until you are notified by DHS that the automatic noticing process through MEDS is in place, DHS is requesting that the NPP distribution be incorporated into the manual Medi-Cal eligibility process so that new beneficiaries can receive a copy of the NPP.

DHS is asking counties to provide the Office of HIPPA Compliance with a contact person, an estimate of the number of English and Spanish NPPs that are needed based upon the monthly new enrollees, and a mailing address where a month's supply of these notices may be sent. Please e-mail this information to sfanelli@dhs.ca.gov by September 5, 2003. Counties will receive the requested number of the Spanish and English NPPs to provide to beneficiaries.

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1501 CAPITOL AVENUE, MS 4607, P.O. BOX 942732, SACRAMENTO, CA 94234-7320
TELEPHONE: (916) 552-9430 FAX: (916) 552-9524
Internet Address: www.dhs.ca.gov

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the new NPP in English and Spanish, with an insert on how beneficiaries can get the NPP in other languages. Counties should make copies of the NPP to give to beneficiaries until they receive the printed copies.

If you have questions regarding the Medi-Cal NPP, please contact the Office of HIPAA Compliance at (916) 255-0691 or you may send questions or comments via email to HIPAATeam@dhs.ca.gov. If you have other questions related to this letter, please contact Mr. Armando Martinez of my staff at (916) 552-9452.

Original signed by

Beth Fife, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

Enclosures