



News Release

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CONTACT: Norman Williams
(916) 440-7660
www.dhcs.ca.gov

DHCS REPORTS INFORMATION SECURITY INCIDENT INVOLVING MEMBERS TRANSITIONING FROM HEALTHY FAMILIES TO MEDI-CAL

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) today reported that 2,643 Medi-Cal benefits identification cards (BIC) were inadvertently mailed to the wrong families. The cards were for children in the Healthy Families Program (HFP) who will transition to Medi-Cal on January 1 during the first phase of a four-phase transition process. The error impacted roughly 1.5 percent of the 179,697 children in that group.

DHCS took immediate action to notify impacted families, correct the mistake and ensure that subsequent mailings are not affected by the error.

“The protection of private information is a top priority for DHCS,” said DHCS Director Toby Douglas. “We take any breach of personal health information very seriously, and we sincerely regret that this information was released. We have increased our efforts to ensure that all information is appropriately protected.”

DHCS learned on December 19 that several individuals received BIC cards in the mail that did not belong to them. An internal review determined that a computer programming error resulted in cards being inserted into the wrong envelopes.

Information on the BIC includes the individual’s name, date of birth, BIC issue date, gender and a client index number. There is a low likelihood that this incident could result in identity theft or fraud. DHCS is working to ensure delivery of the correct BIC to these families prior to January 1, 2013. Notification letters are being sent to all impacted parties, and those who were sent cards erroneously will receive a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the card. A telephone call center has been opened to answer questions. Individuals may call 1-855-297-5064 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Additionally, DHCS has launched a stringent quality assurance process to ensure this error does not happen again. The process includes a forensic analysis to confirm that all other related data is handled properly. A security specialist firm will also be retained to examine information security policies and procedures and to make recommendations for improvements.

DHCS remains prepared to safely transition about 860,000 children from HFP to Medi-Cal throughout 2013. The early identification of this error, prior to the first transfer of any child, allows the department to enhance procedures and ensure this type of error does not impact children in subsequent phases of the transition.

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