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Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

July 15, 2009

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 09-38
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS

SUBJECT: COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT USE OF SECURE E-MAIL
TO SEND CONFIDENTIAL MEDI-CAL INFORMATION

This letter instructs County Welfare Departments (CWDs) to immediately stop sending Medi-Cal Personally Identifiable Information (PII) outside of the CWD internal email environment using non-secure e-mail methods. CWDs sending PII by e-mail are required to encrypt the email by Section VI-E of the Medi-Cal Data Privacy and Security Agreement (Agreement).

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) found that multiple CWDs have sent non-secure emails containing Medi-Cal PII outside of the CWD internal email environment. For example, CWDs are using non-secure email to transmit Medi-Cal PII to the Healthy Families Administrative Vendor (HFAV) and to the DHCS Third Party Liability and Recovery Division (TPLRD).

CWD compliance with the Agreement is a priority for the DHCS. This letter requests that CWDs comply with the terms of the Agreement and stop sending non-secure emails containing Medi-Cal PII outside the CWD internal email environments.

DHCS is aware that some previous All County Welfare Directors Letters (ACWDLs) request that CWDs send DHCS Medi-Cal PII via email and these ACWDLs do not explicitly explain secure e-mail procedures. CWDs still must follow the Agreement by sending any Medi-Cal PII using secure e-mail outside of the CWD internal email environment.

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CWDs have received Medi-Cal County Administration allocation funding and may be in the progress of implementing secure e-mail systems. In the meantime, CWDs that do not have secure email capabilities should work with external business partners to arrange for alternative Medi-Cal PII transmission methods, such as secure faxes or hand-delivery.

DHCS appreciates the CWD commitment to protecting the confidential information provided by Medi-Cal beneficiaries. If you have any questions regarding the information in this letter, please contact Mr. Michael Chen at (916) 319-9734 or at Michael.Chen@dhcs.ca.gov.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Vivian Auble, Chief
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