

January 24, 2020

### ***Investigation Leads to Notification of Data Breach*** **DHS Takes Steps to Protect Information**

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) announced today, that there was a breach in personal information related to some Dallas County income maintenance and social work cases. The breach occurred on November 25, 2019. There are 4,784 individuals whose information was included in the breach.

The breach occurred when a contracted custodial company mistakenly emptied boxes containing documents to be shredded into the office's garbage dumpster. The incident was not discovered until after the garbage dumpster had been emptied. DHS cannot be certain which documents from each worker's cases had been printed. As a precaution, notifications were sent to all case parties whose information may have been printed and thrown into the garbage dumpster without being confidentially shredded. The Department has had no reports that any affected parties had their information misused.

The types of information involved potentially could include name, mailing address, date of birth, social security number, driver's license number, banking or wage information, disability information, medical information, receipt of Medicaid, mental health information, provider information, substance abuse information, illegal drug use information, or prescription drug information.

The Department launched an internal investigation on December 2, 2019, once the issue was identified by a social work supervisor. Officials found that the custodial worker was not aware of the confidential nature of the paperwork in the boxes under the employees' desks and threw out the paperwork thinking it was trash. DHS has clarified with all employees that all confidential paperwork must be secured to ensure confidentiality of its clients and the employees in the office were required to take refresher confidentiality training.

The chance that this information was accessed in the process of it being transported from the office to the garbage dump site is small, but we realize the affected persons involved in these cases may wish to take steps to be sure their information wasn't misused.

Individuals who receive a letter notifying them of the breach can get more information if they are concerned their identity may be compromised, including signing up for free credit monitoring. They can call the TransUnion Credit Bureau at 855-288-5422.

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