



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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MARCH 11, 2024

Department of Developmental Services Provides HIPAA Breach Notification

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is a state agency that supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Massachusetts.

On January 11, 2024, DDS discovered that some of the buildings located at the former Walter E. Fernald Developmental Center campus in Waltham, MA, sold by the state to the City of Waltham in December 2014, contained personal documents relating to people who were served by DDS at the Fernald Developmental Center, as well as records of DDS staff. DDS inspected the property after receiving a complaint about documents on the property.

Documents discovered by DDS were not stored correctly since the closure of school in 2014. Although the types of unsecured protected health information are not fully known due to the state of the documents, we know some documents contained names, dates of birth, diagnoses, medical information, medication/prescription information, and other treatment information. No financial account information or Social Security numbers have been identified at this time, but DDS is not able to confirm that this information is not in any of the documents due to their condition.

DDS learned of the breach of information on January 11, and began collecting and securing records on January 12. Due to the state of the buildings as well as the presence of potentially hazardous materials, DDS contracted with a vendor specializing in hazardous cleanups. All documents collected from the property will be securely stored until the State Archivist and Secretary of State's Office recommends retention requirements.

While DDS is not aware of any misuse of personal information resulting from the breach, individuals are encouraged to remain vigilant against incidents of identity theft by reviewing financial account statements for unusual activity and reporting any suspicious activity immediately to their financial institution.

Individuals seeking additional information about this can call DDS' toll-free assistance line at 1-833-707-8200, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Individuals may also contact DDS at DDS-Fernald-Breach@mass.gov or write to the DDS Privacy Officer at 1000 Washington Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02118. Additional information on this incident can also be found on DDS' website <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departament-of-developmental-services>.