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OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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October 26, 2021

Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation
501 Boylston Street, Suite 5100
Boston, MA 02116
Attn: Undersecretary Edward A. Palleschi
(via certified mail)

Dear Undersecretary Palleschi,

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 93H, Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. (ESWA) wrote on September 29, 2021 to notify you of an incident involving the disclosure of personal information relating to nine Massachusetts residents (sometimes referred to as the "Residents") to unauthorized recipient(s) (the "Recipient(s)").

ESWA, through a state funded program, provides training and funding to eligible MassHealth recipients to employ and manage their own personal care services. ¹ We learned of the incident on January 29, 2021, when a complaint was filed with ESWA/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. The incident was the result of a nurse (Rebecca Blakesley) sharing her credentials with unauthorized individuals. Please note that ESWA was required by law to delay this notification as a result of a law enforcement referral.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 93H, ESWA sent a notice of the incident to the Residents on September 29, 2021. A copy of the notification letter sent to the Residents was shared with you, with identifying information withheld. At that time, ESWA also certified that the credit monitoring services offered to the Residents through "Privacy Guard" complied with applicable requirements.

After additional consideration, ESWA has decided not to use "Privacy Guard" for these residents' credit monitoring purposes, instead we will be offering credit monitoring through "Experian's Identify Works" for a 24-month period. As such, the enclosed letter has been mailed to all nine residents to inform them of the change in ESWA's mitigation plan.

If you have questions, please contact me at 508-756-1545 x 178 or abullett@eswa.org.

Sincerely,

Amy Bullett
Operations Manager/Privacy Officer

Enclosure: Consumer Notification Letter - no identifiers

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October 26, 2021

Name
Address
City/Zip

Dear [Member Name],

On September 29, 2021, Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. (ESWA) mailed a certified letter to notify you of a privacy incident that took place involving a nurse at Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. (ESWA) who **may** have provided unauthorized access to other individuals to your personal information.

The letter further explained that a thorough investigation was completed and that the results of the investigation gave us no reason to believe that your information was used in an impermissible manner. Nevertheless, ESWA highlighted some steps that you could take if you were concerned about the potential misuse of your personal information including but not limited to having your credit monitored by a company called "Privacy Guard" for an eighteen-month period. **This is to lower any risk of identity theft.**

After additional consideration, ESWA has decided not to use "Privacy Guard" for this purpose, instead we will be offering credit monitoring through "Experian's Identify Works" for a 24-month period.

What is a Credit Monitoring Service?

A credit monitoring service is a company that usually charges a monthly fee to keep an eye on your credit. If you choose to have your credit monitored via Experian's Identity Works, **ESWA will pay the associated monthly fee for a twenty-four-month period – this will not be your expense.** If you wish to receive this credit monitoring, please contact me so that I can assist you with activating your free membership. This will require you to:

- Enroll by an identified enrollment date.
- Visit the Experian Identify Works website to enroll.
- Provide the specific activation code that you will be given by ESWA to enroll in the program and begin to receive credit monitoring services. **This activation code is only in effect during the enrollment period.**

How Does a Credit Monitoring Service Work?

A credit monitoring service works by having the user set up their profile, verify their personal information—including current address, date of birth, Social Security number, etc.—and create a secure password-protected account. The user gives the credit monitoring service permission to monitor their credit and alert them when any activity occurs. **Experian's Identity Works' credit monitoring services monitors all three credit bureaus.**

Once again, we are sorry that this incident has occurred. ESWA takes the confidentiality of your personal information very seriously, and we regret any inconvenience or concern this incident has caused you. If you have any questions and/or wish to have your credit monitored as outlined in this letter, please contact me at 508-756-1545 x 178 or by e-mail at abullett@eswa.org.

Sincerely,

Amy Bullett
Operations Manager/Privacy Officer

Enclosures: Babble Sheet