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Mass General Brigham

Brigham and Women's Hospital
Founding Member, Mass General Brigham
Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital
Health Information Management
T 617 582 5201
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February 9, 2023

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]:

Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), a member of Mass General Brigham, is committed to protecting the security and confidentiality of our patients' information. Regrettably, we are writing to inform you of an incident involving some of that information and apologize for any concern this may cause.

On January 30, 2023, we learned that a document containing some of your health information was mistakenly mailed to the incorrect patient and viewed by the recipient on August 15, 2022. The personal information disclosed consisted of demographics, including your full name, date of birth, address, and phone number. The clinical information disclosed included your diagnosis, type of procedure, insurance member numbers, insurance company names, name of physician and contact information. To date, we have no knowledge that any of your information has been used improperly. As a Massachusetts resident, you have the following rights:

- Right to obtain any police report filed regarding this incident.
- Right to file and obtain a copy of a police report if you are the victim of identity theft.
- Right to request that the credit bureaus place a security freeze on your file. Please refer to the enclosed information sheet for instructions on placing a security freeze on your credit report and additional steps you can take to further reduce any potential risk to you.

We sincerely regret any concern this may cause. BWH takes the privacy and security of our patients' information very seriously. We want to assure you that this matter was appropriately addressed. To help prevent something like this from happening again, we continue to improve safeguards in place to protect your information and promote training and education of our employees. To that end, as of the date of this letter, corrective action has been taken in accordance with our policies to prevent future breaches. Likewise, the document was destroyed by the unintended recipient.

If you have any questions about the incident, please feel free to contact us directly either by email at bwhcHIPAA@partners.org or toll free at 833-294-2020 during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday.

Sincerely,

Nitra Vines, MS
Brigham & Women's Hospital
Privacy Specialist

cc:
James Contrino
Brigham & Women's Hospital
HIPAA Privacy Manager

Enclosures: Steps you can take to protect your identity

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY

Security Freeze. A security freeze prevents credit reporting bureaus from releasing information in your credit file. This can make it harder for identify thieves to open new accounts in your name. Please be aware, however, that placing a security freeze on your credit report may delay approval of any requests you make for new loans, credit, mortgages, or other services.

You have the right to request a security freeze for free. To place a security freeze on your file, you must contact each of the three national credit reporting bureaus. You can contact them by phone, online submission, or mail.

Equifax Information Services	Experian	TransUnion
P.O. Box 105788 Atlanta, GA 30348 1-800-685-1111 www.equifax.com/ personal/credit-report-services/	P.O. Box 9554 Allen, TX 75013 1-888-397-3742 www.experian.com/help	P.O. Box 2000 Chester, PA 19016 1-888-909-8872 www.transunion.com/ credit-help

When requesting a security freeze, you will need to provide information to confirm your identity, such as your name, proof of your current address, your prior address if you've moved in the last five years, your date of birth, Social Security number, and other personal information.

A security freeze request made by phone or online will be effective within one hour. Requests by mail take up to three business days from when the bureau gets it to be effective. After requesting a freeze, you will be given a unique personal identification number (PIN) and/or a password. Keep this in a safe place as you will need it to temporarily lift or fully remove the security freeze.

The freeze will remain until you ask the credit bureau to temporarily lift or fully remove it. If the request is made online or by phone, a credit bureau must lift security freeze within one hour. If the request is made by mail, then the bureau must lift the freeze no later than three business days after getting your request. There is no charge for placing, lifting, or removing a security freeze.

Review Your Account Statements. Carefully review your bank, credit card, and other account statements every month to ensure that your account activity is valid. Report any questionable charges promptly and in writing to the card or account issuer.

Check Your Credit Report. Check your credit report to ensure that all your information is correct. You can obtain a free credit report once per year by visiting www.annualcreditreport.com or by calling 877-322-8228. If you notice any inaccuracies, report the dispute right away to the relevant credit reporting bureau. You can file a dispute on the relevant bureau's website or by contacting them at the number listed on your credit report. You can also report any suspicious activity to your local law enforcement, in which case you should request a copy of the police report and retain it for your records.

Fraud Alert. You have the right to request that the credit bureaus place a fraud alert on your file. A fraud alert tells creditors to contact you before opening any new accounts or increasing credit limits on your existing accounts. A fraud alert lasts for one year and is free of charge.

You need to contact only <u>one</u> of the three credit bureaus to place a fraud alert; the one you contact is required by law to contact the other two. For Fraud Alerts, use the credit bureau contact information, provided above in the Security Freeze section.

Consult the Federal Trade Commission. For more guidance on steps you can take to protect your information, you also can contact the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/idtheft, or at 877-ID-THEFT (877-438- 4338), or at the Identity Theft Clearinghouse, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20580.