St. Vincent Medical Center
A Part of Verity Health

2131 W. 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90057

May 2, 2019

[redacted]

RE: Notice of Possible Data Breach

Dear [redacted]

St. Vincent Medical Center is a member of the Verity Health System ("VHS" or "Verity"). VHS takes the privacy and security of all of the health information it maintains on behalf of its affiliated hospitals very seriously. We are writing to inform you that, unfortunately, it is possible that the security of your information may have been compromised as a result of the unauthorized activity of a third party.

What Happened?

On March 26, 2019, St. Vincent Medical Center ("SVMC" or "Hospital") discovered that the web email account of one of its hospital-based pathologists had been compromised. Within hours of discovering the incident on March 26, 2019, the VHS[1] information security team promptly terminated the unauthorized access, disabled the email account, and disconnected the device from the network. Upon further investigation, the Hospital has determined that this email account was initially compromised on March 15, 2019. During this time, a third party obtained access to the physician's email account without authorization and from this account, sent emails to various internal and external email accounts containing malicious links and attachments. It appears that this was an attempt to obtain user names and passwords from the recipients of these emails. During the window when the physician's email account was accessed by the unauthorized third party, the intruder had the ability to access any emails or attachments present in any of email folders at that time. We have confirmed that the third party did not gain access to the email accounts of any other Verity employee or to the VHS servers or network more generally.

[1] VHS maintains e-mail and other electronic systems in its role as a business associate for St. Vincent Medical Center.

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We reviewed the physician's email folders and have determined that one or more of the email attachments included some of your health information. We have not been able to conclude whether the third party actually accessed, viewed or read your health information. More importantly, your information does not appear to have been sent or forwarded and to date, we are not aware of any misuse of your information. Out of an abundance of caution, we wanted to let you know about this incident and notify you of options available to you to protect yourself.

What Information Was Involved?

The emails and attachments containing health information that may have been accessed without authorization included names, dates of birth, medical record numbers, health plan name, dates of service, treatment received, medical conditions, lab test information, phone numbers, and addresses. The third party did not have access to your financial account numbers or social security number.

What We Are Doing About It

Within hours of discovering the incident, the VHS information security team promptly terminated the unauthorized access, disabled the email account, and disconnected the device from the network. The information security team removed all unauthorized emails sent to Verity or affiliated employees and disabled all email accounts where the user clicked on the link before the email was deleted. There was no unauthorized access to any other VHS or affiliated employees' accounts.

Since this incident, VHS has initiated a project to enhance security focused on protecting against phishing emails and emails containing malicious attachments and links. Additionally, VHS has implemented additional security measures including multi-factor authentication and enhanced filtering of malicious email. SVMC is providing individual counseling and re-education to the individuals involved, and deploying a new security training module for SVMC medical staff members.

What You Can Do

As a precautionary measure, we recommend that you monitor your account statements and credit reports carefully. If you detect any unusual or suspicious activity, you should promptly notify the institution or company with which the account is maintained.

You may also want to contact the three U.S. credit reporting agencies to report the incident, to request a report, and to ask that a fraud alert be placed on your credit file.

- Experian.com/help

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888-EXPERIAN (888-397-3742)
P.O. Box 2104 Allen, TX 75013-0949

- TransUnion.com/credit-help[2]
  888-909-8872
  P.O. Box 1000 Chester, PA 19022

- Equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services
  800-349-9960
  P.O. Box 740241 Atlanta, GA 30374-0241

You can also request a free credit report once a year at www.annualcreditreport.com or by calling 877-322-8228.

For More Information

Verity has set up a call center to answer questions and provide additional information about this incident. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please call 877-354-7979 from Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Pacific Time).

We sincerely regret that this incident occurred and apologize for any inconvenience or concern it may cause.

Sincerely,

Elspeth D. Paul
General Counsel, Verity Health Systems

[2] This can be done any time and may supplement the services available through myTrueIdentity Credit Monitoring.