



**City and County of San Francisco**  
**Mark Farrell, Mayor**

**Department of Public Health**  
**Barbara A. Garcia, MPA**  
**Director of Health**

May 11, 2018

[Reference #: 2017-1222]

Pt Name  
Address  
Address

**Subject: NOTICE OF DATA PRIVACY INCIDENT**

Dear (insert patient name)

We are sending this letter to you as part of the San Francisco Department of Public Health's (SFDPH) commitment to your privacy. We learned that a security incident at one of our third-party vendors involved some of your personal information. Although we are not aware of any misuse of your information, we are providing this notice to ensure that you are aware of the incident

On December 22, 2017, Nuance Communications, Inc. ("Nuance") a third party medical transcription service provider of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, informed us that an unauthorized person accessed patient reports from a Nuance computer system. An investigation revealed that the unauthorized person accessed patient information between November 20, 2017 and December 9, 2017.

The patient information involved included your personal information. The information did not include your social security number or address. **We are not aware that any information stolen could lead to economic harm for you.** More information about this incident is on the backside of this letter.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health is committed to maintain the privacy of our patients and takes its responsibility to address privacy incidents seriously. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience or concern that this situation may cause and are taking steps to improve how we ensure that our vendors protect patient privacy.

**Should you have any questions about this matter, please contact the SFDPH Privacy Office at our toll free number (855) 729-6040 and reference "Nuance" or #2017-122 in your message.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roland Pickens MHA". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Roland Pickens, MHA, FACHE**  
**Director, San Francisco Health Network**

Question	Answer
<b>What happened?</b>	<p>Nuance is a company which provides services to the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Our providers dictate patient information and Nuance puts that information in writing (transcriptions) for patients' medical records. Those transcriptions were on a computer system which an unauthorized individual accessed.</p> <p>The FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice conducted a criminal investigation concerning the data security incident and theft of personal information. They requested that notification and disclosure about the data security incident be delayed. Under California and Federal law we are required to comply with a law enforcement agency's request for a delay if the agency believes that notification or disclosure could interfere with their criminal investigation.</p> <p>The criminal investigation determined that a former Nuance employee breached Nuance's servers and accessed the personal information of several individuals.</p>
<b>What information was involved</b>	<p>The information involved in this data security incident may have included: your name, date of birth, medical record number, patient number, medical information involving your condition, assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and/or plan of care, and date of service. <b>It <u>did not</u> contain any other information, such as Social Security number, Driver's License number, or financial account numbers which could expose you to identity theft.</b> Nonetheless, we felt it necessary to inform you since your medical information was involved.</p> <p><b>The U.S. Department of Justice has informed us that based on their criminal investigation, it does not appear that this former employee used or sold any of the personal information taken.</b></p>
<b>What We Are Doing</b>	<p>We are working with Nuance to continue to address this issue. Immediately upon discovering the breach, Nuance took steps to block access to the transcription system and permanently took the system offline.</p>
<b>What You Can Do</b>	<p>If you find any suspicious activity on your credit reports, call your local police or sheriff's office. We recommend that you regularly review statements from your accounts and periodically obtain your credit report from one or more of the national credit reporting companies. Keep a copy of this notice for your records in case of future problems with your medical records. You may also want to request a copy of your medical records from SFDPH to serve as a baseline.</p>
<b>For More Information</b>	<p><b>Call the SFDPH Privacy Office toll-free number (855) 729-6040 and reference "Nuance" or #2017-122 in your message.</b></p>

