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For Immediate Release

NM Human Services Department Notifying Medicaid Members About Information Security Breach

Department Encourages Clients to Enroll in Free Credit Reporting Services

Santa Fe – The NM Human Services Department is in the process of notifying approximately 9,600 Medicaid Salud! Plan and Fee for Service members that a breach of Protected Health Information occurred in March. The department is encouraging all members to protect themselves by placing a free fraud alert on their credit accounts, and is providing a toll-free number for concerned clients.

On April 9, 2010, the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) was notified by DentaQuest, a company that processes claims and provides dental benefits for the State's Medicaid program that a breach of Protected Health Information occurred. Notification of the breach is also being reported to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to Federal Rules.

An employee of a company called West Monroe Partners had an unencrypted laptop in the trunk of a car when the vehicle was stolen on March 20, 2010. The theft occurred in Chicago, Illinois. West Monroe Partners is a subcontractor for DentaQuest. The laptop contained patient information including: name, health plan identification number, which in some cases is the individual's social security number, and a provider identification number but not the name of the provider. A police report on the theft was filed. The computer was password protected but otherwise did not have safeguards to prevent unauthorized access to the information. At this time, the stolen car and laptop have not been recovered and it is not known whether the information on the laptop has been accessed.

HSD takes unauthorized disclosures of Protected Health Information very seriously and has launched an investigation into this incident. In addition to sending member notification letters, HSD has set up a toll-free call line through DentaQuest, 1-877-453-8424, to take questions from individuals who may have been affected by this incident. The call line will be staffed from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MDT, Monday through Friday.

For individuals who are interested in placing a fraud alert on their accounts; instructions are provided in the member notification letter or individuals can call the toll- free number above or visit the HSD web site at www.hsd.state.nm.us.

HSD is working closely with its health plan partners that administer the Salud! Plan (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico, Lovelace Health Plan, Molina Healthcare, and Presbyterian Health Plan) to ensure that they as well as all subcontractors develop appropriate security measures to eliminate incidents of this kind from occurring in the future.

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