



PeaceHealth
Southwest Medical Center

Return Mail Processing Center
PO Box 6336
Portland, OR 97228-6336

<<Mail ID>>
Estate or Next of Kin of
<<Name>>
<<Address1>>
<<Address2>>
<<City>>, <<ST>> <<ZIP>>

<<Date>>

To the estate or next of kin of <<Name>>,

PeaceHealth is committed to maintaining the privacy and security of our patients. Consistent with our commitment to you, I'm writing to inform you of an incident that occurred in which some of the personal information of <<Name>> was accessed without authorization.

On Aug. 9, we discovered that an employee at PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center unnecessarily accessed electronic files containing protected health information for a group of patients, including <<Name>>, between November 2011 and July 2017. PeaceHealth sincerely apologizes for this incident and any concern this may cause you. Privacy is among our highest priorities, and we take this very seriously. The employee responsible no longer works for PeaceHealth.

We immediately investigated and determined that the information accessed included some or all of the following: Name, age, gender, medical record number, account number, admission/discharge date, discharge status, department, progress notes and diagnosis. **Social security number and financial information were not included.**

Based on the nature of the information accessed, we do not believe information for <<Name>> may be used for identity theft. We recommend, however, that you review any explanation of benefits received from <<Name>>'s health insurer. If you see services that <<Name>> did not receive, please contact the insurer immediately.

To help prevent future incidents such as this, we are reinforcing education with our staff regarding the appropriate access of patient information. Should you have any questions or concerns, please call 1-888-449-6634 Monday through Friday between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Pacific Time.

Sincerely,

Chad Knight
PeaceHealth Interim System Vice President, Organizational Integrity

Protecting Deceased Individuals

The following steps are recommended to help protect the personal information of deceased individuals. Typically, the Social Security Administration will notify the credit reporting agencies (CRAs) of a death when they update their files. It is advisable to contact the CRAs in writing to notify them of the death, request that a “deceased” alert be placed on the individual’s credit report, and obtain a copy of the credit report for your records. A review of each report will provide information regarding active credit accounts that need to be closed, or any pending collection notices. The addresses for reporting this information to the three major CRAs are:

Equifax, PO Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374, www.equifax.com, 1-800-685-1111
Experian, PO Box 2002, Allen, TX 75013, www.experian.com, 1-888-397-3742
TransUnion, PO Box 2000, Chester, PA 19016, www.transunion.com, 1-800-916-8800

Contact all credit issuers, collection agencies, and other financial institutions where the deceased individual had accounts to inform them of the death. Each entity may have its own required notification procedures, but the following general information can serve as a guide:

- Obtain at least 12 copies of the official death certificate when it becomes available. In some cases, you may be able to use a photocopy, but certain entities will request an original. In some cases, a business may require additional information as proof of death.
- Include the following information in your correspondence:
 - Name and SSN of deceased
 - Last known address of the deceased, and previous addresses for the past 5 years
 - Date of birth and date of death
- To speed up processing, include all of the documentation required by that specific agency or organization in your first letter.
- Send important correspondence by certified mail with return receipt requested.
- Keep copies of all correspondence, noting date sent and any response(s) you receive.

Please note that the CRAs may require a court order or other paperwork to prove that you are the executor of an estate. Friends, neighbors, relatives and others do not have the same rights as the executor or a deceased individual’s spouse. In most cases, these other individuals are considered third parties, and a CRA may not disclose credit reports or update a consumer file without authorization from the spouse or executor. CRAs may make exceptions for unique situations, which they handle on a case-by-case basis. You may write to the CRA to explain your situation and request assistance.

If you have reason to believe your family member’s personal information has been misused, you should contact the Federal Trade Commission. Contact information for the Federal Trade Commission is as follows:

Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Response Center, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20580, 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338), www.ftc.gov/idtheft

You should also contact your local law enforcement authorities and file a police report. Obtain a copy of the police report in case you are asked to provide copies to creditors.