



## NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



# New Jersey Department of Human Services Notice on Ocean County Board of Social Services Medicaid Burial Assistance Breach

Oct. 27, 2022

(TRENTON) – The New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (the Division) and the Ocean County Board of Social Services (OCBSS) administer Medicaid benefits in Ocean County. On July 13, 2022, an OCBSS employee sent an email with a spreadsheet containing personal information regarding approximately 3,900 deceased former Medicaid burial assistance beneficiaries to an Ocean County employee who was not authorized to receive this information. The spreadsheet included several tabs containing the following information about these deceased individuals: name; date of death; Medicaid case number; social security number; burial number; funeral home; cemetery; and information regarding receipt of funeral benefits. OCBSS discovered this breach on August 29, 2022.

OCBSS immediately commenced an investigation of this incident after they learned about it. OCBSS: confiscated the computer of the employee who sent the spreadsheet; ensured the employee had not sent the information to anyone else; confirmed with the county that the recipient of the spreadsheet did not email it to anyone else or download it; and ensured that the email and spreadsheet were deleted from both the sender's and recipient's accounts. OCBSS

does not have reason to believe anyone else received the spreadsheet and it appears that it was not shared with the intent to divulge private information.

The Division and OCBSS do not have contact information for the personal representatives of the deceased former Medicaid burial assistance beneficiaries whose personal information was shared. But the Division and OCBSS do not believe that these representatives need to take steps to protect any information as a result of this breach, as it does not appear that the information was further shared and it was deleted from the accounts of the parties involved.

OCBSS has taken the following steps to minimize any impact and prevent a reoccurrence: all confidential beneficiary and applicant information has been removed from any shared computer drives; access to logs and spreadsheets containing confidential beneficiary and applicant information is restricted to designated supervisory staff who may authorize limited access and provide oversight to only those workers who are assigned to specific tasks involving this information; the time period covered by any compilations of confidential beneficiary information has been reduced to no more than one year; and in addition to ongoing mandatory annual confidentiality training for all employees, OCBSS has reminded all employees of their confidentiality obligations, emphasizing the confidentiality of all beneficiary and applicant information.

The Division and OCBSS value privacy and confidentiality and regret that this incident occurred. Questions or concerns regarding this matter can be directed to Charles Castillo at [Charles.Castillo@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:Charles.Castillo@dhs.nj.gov) or 1-800-598-6815.

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