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## **Notice of Privacy Incident Potentially Impacting Some People with Medicare**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that manages the Medicare program, is posting this notice of a data breach at a CMS contractor, Palmetto GBA, to notify potentially impacted people with Medicare who could not be reached because an April 2023 mailing attempt could not be delivered and was returned. We estimate that up to approximately 10,000 people with Medicare in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee had information that was potentially exposed during this breach. Individuals who didn't receive a letter in the mail and want to confirm whether they may be impacted can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to learn if their information may be included in this breach. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048. This incident does not impact any person's Medicare benefits or coverage.

### **What Happened?**

Between January 8 and January 29, 2023, Palmetto GBA, a CMS contractor that handles Medicare claims on behalf of CMS, had a computer programming issue with their print mail services which resulted in one or more Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) from the last quarter of 2022 being printed and inserted into an envelope that went to another Medicare beneficiary in the same zip code within Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Palmetto GBA discovered the programming issue on February 7, 2023, and reported the incident to CMS the same day. Since then, CMS has been working diligently with the contractor to determine what information and which individuals may have been impacted.

When we learned about the incident, Palmetto GBA and CMS immediately started an investigation to identify what personal information might have been compromised. While we have determined the risk of identity theft, Medicare fraud, and impact to credit to be minimal, we have taken several steps to address this incident. Palmetto GBA has resolved the programming issue and implemented several processes, including enhanced review of mail services computer programming and an increased review of printed mail for quality assurance purposes, to further assure protection of personal information and prevent similar instances from occurring in the future. Palmetto GBA is also instructing all recipients of the incorrectly distributed notices to dispose of them properly.

### **What Information Was Involved**

After careful review, we have determined that personal and Medicare information for some Medicare enrollees may have been compromised. This information may have included the following:

- Name
- Address
- Claim Number
- Dates of Service
- Medicare Beneficiary Identifier – last four digits
- Service/procedure descriptions with billing codes

Medicare Summary Notices don't include your Social Security Number or bank information.

### **What CMS is Doing**

When the incident was reported, CMS immediately started an investigation, working with the contractor to identify what personal information, if any, might have been compromised. CMS is continuing to investigate this incident and will continue to take all appropriate actions to safeguard the information entrusted to CMS.

### **What Potentially Impacted People Can Do**

At this time, CMS is not aware of any reports of identity fraud or improper use of information of people with Medicare as a direct result of this incident. However, you may want to take the following actions:

- Contact a Palmetto GBA representative by calling toll free 1-855-200-0758 or emailing [PalmCompliance.Admin@palmettogba.com](mailto:PalmCompliance.Admin@palmettogba.com) if you have any questions.
- Request a change to your MBI number by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

### **For More Information**

CMS takes the privacy and security of personal information very seriously, and apologizes for the inconvenience this privacy incident might have caused. You can review a [sample of the mailed letter](#), including steps to protect your personal information, on [Medicare.gov](http://Medicare.gov). You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) with any general questions or concerns about Medicare.

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