



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance**

Pat McCrory
Governor

Richard O. Brajer
Secretary

Dave Richard
Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance

October 1, 2015

Attention: Social Services Directors, Privacy and Security Officials

Dear County Director of Social Services:

Subject: Inappropriate Transmission of Personal Information

The Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) Privacy Official has been made aware of a practice some county staff have been using while conducting business with DMA. Recipient's full names along with their Social Security Numbers have been typed in the subject line and sent via unencrypted email. This practice is a clear violation of the NC Identity Theft Protection Law, (N.C.G.S. § 75-60) and North Carolina Public Health Law (N.C.G.S. § 130A-12). Even when using an email encryption tool, data in the subject line is not encrypted and therefore susceptible to unauthorized disclosure.

All Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be encrypted when transmitted electronically. Please ensure that all county staff are aware of HIPAA, Omnibus, HITECH and North Carolina privacy and security requirements and that all PHI/PII is encrypted anytime it is emailed.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this letter, please contact the DMA Privacy Official, Cynthia Holland at 919-814-0170 or cynthia.holland@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Richard", written over a horizontal line.

Dave Richard

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