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NEWS RELEASE

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Health Professions Announces Direct Notifications

Follow-up to Statewide Notification of Prescription Monitoring Program Security Breach

RICHMOND – The Virginia Department of Health Professions (DHP) is mailing direct individual notifications to persons whose social security numbers may have been contained in the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) database in followup to the statewide notification provided on May 6, 2009.

“Although the investigation has yet to determine what, if any, personal information is at risk, DHP nonetheless recommends that persons remain vigilant over the next 12 to 14 months,” said Sandra Whitley Ryals, Director of the Virginia Department of Health Professions.

On April 30, 2009, DHP became aware that the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) computer system had been accessed by an unauthorized user. A criminal investigation continues to be pursued aggressively by federal and state law enforcement. All PMP data was properly backed up and all back-ups have been secured. There is no evidence that systems beyond the PMP were involved.

The purpose of the mailing is to directly inform individuals of the potential exposure of social security numbers and to advise persons of precautionary steps that may be taken.

“While there are over 35 million prescription records in the PMP database, only the 530,000 individuals whose prescription records may have contained social security numbers will receive the direct mailing,” said Ryals. “Additionally 1400 registered users of the program who may have provided social security numbers when they registered for the program also are being sent an individual notification.”

The PMP system will be made accessible to registered users as soon as clearance is received by the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) security experts and law enforcement authorities following a number of advanced security measures being put in place.

As more information becomes available, updates will be posted on the agency’s website (www.dhp.virginia.gov)

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The mission of the Virginia Department of Health Professions (DHP) is to enhance the delivery of safe and competent health care by licensing qualified health care professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to both practitioners and consumers of health care services.