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NEWS RELEASE

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Statement by DHP Director Sandra Ryals on Potential Breach of Security for Prescription Monitoring Program

RICHMOND – Sandra Whitley Ryals, Director of the Virginia Department of Health Professions (DHP), issued the following statement today regarding a potential breach of security for the Prescription Monitoring Program mandated by Virginia state law:

“A criminal investigation is currently underway regarding a potential security breach of the Virginia Department of Health Profession’s (DHP) Prescription Monitoring Program on Thursday, April 30. While DHP cannot comment directly on an ongoing investigation, we can assure the public that all precautions are being taken for DHP operations to continue safely and securely.

“Since last week, when DHP recognized an unauthorized message was posted on the Prescription Monitoring Program website, we have been working very closely and cooperatively with federal and state law enforcement to resolve the situation. The entire DHP system has been shut down since Thursday to protect the security of the program data, and state authorities including the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) and the Virginia State Police were notified immediately upon identifying the potential breach. We are satisfied that all data was properly backed up and that these backup files have been secured.

“As the criminal investigation permits, we will be sharing additional details in the coming days on the agency’s website (www.dhp.virginia.gov) including questions and answers for concerned program participants.”

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About the Prescription Monitoring Program:

Mandated by Virginia law, the Prescription Monitoring Program collects required prescription information from pharmacies across the state for certain types of drugs, such as highly addictive pain killers. Designed to help reduce drug abuse, theft, and illegal sale of prescription drugs, the prescription information is made available only to registered users of the system, including licensed drug prescribers. The program does not collect or maintain medical histories of patients.

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.