

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HIPAA Breach Notification**

September 25, 2020 - Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) had a security breach which could have disclosed personal information of individuals who have interacted with Anchorage Office of Children's Services (OCS). Due to the potential for stolen personal information, DHSS urges Alaskans who have been involved with the OCS Anchorage office to take actions to protect themselves from identity theft.

On September 25th, a security guard at the Anchorage regional OCS office reported finding confidential documents on the ground next to the dumpster. At this time, DHSS is unable to determine when the items were discarded or who was responsible. Security surveillance later shows two unidentifiable people looking through documents and taking a few with them.

The following information that may have been in the discarded files include:

Full Names

Dates of Birth

Social Security Numbers

Addresses

Telephone Numbers

Internal identifying numbers (Case Reports, Protected Service Reports, etc.)

Outside of the identifiers listed above, case notes and protective services reports can include information such as: the school a child attends, specific allegations against an individual concerning abuse and/or neglect of a child, responses from individuals and historical information concerning the family's interaction with the department.

Upon discovery of this event, the department took immediate action to investigate the breach and prevent any future events. The Department of Health and Social Services takes privacy and security very seriously and is working very hard in conjunction with authorities to ensure laws, policies, and protocols are followed.

For more information about how to avoid identity theft, visit the Federal Trade Commission's website [Identitytheft.gov](http://Identitytheft.gov).

We sincerely apologize for this inconvenience. The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to providing services with excellence, which includes protecting your personal information. We have updated procedures regarding the disposal of sensitive documents to strengthen the protections safeguarding the privacy of your personal information.

If you have any questions about this notice, please call 1-888-484-9355 or DHSS's Privacy Official 907-465-2150 or email [privacyoffical@alaska.gov](mailto:privacyoffical@alaska.gov).