

Notice of HIPAA Breach

Brief Description of What Happened and Description of the Types of Unsecured PHI

On or about November 6, 2024, High Point Advocacy and Resource Center (the "Center") discovered that certain client records may have been removed from the Center's premises by an employee without the Center's authorization. The Center requested that the employee return the client files, but they refused to do so prior to their resignation on December 9, 2024. The client records included information regarding clients' treatment at the Center including: Name, address, phone number, date of birth, social security number, drug and alcohol assessment, DUI evaluations, treatment plan, counselor progress notes, peer mentor progress notes, group session notes, quarterly treatment plan updates, discharge plan, health insurance, and financial information.

Investigation, Mitigation, and Protection Against Future Breaches

The Center immediately commenced an investigation into this breach. The investigation included interviews with Center staff members, review of computer records, review of the Center paper records and filing cabinets, interviews of the former employee, and written communications to the former employee. Based on the investigation, the Center has taken several steps to mitigate harm and to protect against further breaches. The Center's legal counsel sent the former employee a letter demanding the return of all client files and instructing the former employee from any further use or disclosure of client protected health information. Despite the demands to return the client records, the former employee refused to do so. Therefore, on April 17, 2025, the Center filed a lawsuit against the former employee for the return of the Center's client files. The Center has also reported the former employee to law enforcement and the licensing board. The Center is reviewing its client record documentation and storage practices and will update them accordingly.

Steps to Take to Protect Against Potential Harm

While the Center does not have any reason to believe that the information would be used in an inappropriate manner, because there is always a concern of identity theft when personal information reaches unintended recipients, we are advising our clients to monitor activity on their credit and other accounts. Clients should consider taking the following actions:

1. Call the toll-free numbers of one of the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on their credit reports. This can help prevent identity theft by preventing new accounts from being opened. Ask for copies of credit reports. The three major credit bureaus are:
 - a. Equifax 1-800-525-6285 (P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta GA 30374-0241)
 - b. Experian 1-888-397-3742 (P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013)
 - c. TransUnion 1-800-680-7289 (Attn: Fraud Victims Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790)
2. Monitor their credit reports. Examine their reports closely for activity that the Patient has

3. Monitor banking and credit card statements closely for activity that the Patient has not initiated.
4. Visit the Federal Trade Commission Identity Theft website for information on identity theft protections. www.ftc.gov (to Quick Finder and click on Identity Theft).

If a Client suspects that their records are being used inappropriately or they note any unauthorized activity on their credit and other accounts, we encourage them to make a report with law enforcement.

The Center takes seriously its role in maintaining the privacy and security of client information. As a result of this incident, steps are underway to further improve the security of its processes and eliminate future risk.

If you have questions or want additional information, please call the Center at (785) 460-8463. I may also be reached by email at sherry@highpointadvocacy.com or by mail at 785 W. Webster Street, Colby, Kansas 67701. You are also welcome to come to the Center and speak with us in person. We apologize for any inconvenience, stress, or worry that this event may cause you.

Sincerely,

Sherry White
High Point Advocacy and Resource Center
Chief Executive Officer