

## **NOTICE OF DATA PRIVACY EVENT**

**December 29, 2023** Essen Medical Associates, P.C. (“Essen”) is providing notice of a data event that may impact the privacy of certain individuals’ personal information and/or protected health information (“PHI”). Although we are unaware of any occurrences of identity theft or fraud resulting from this incident, we are providing information about the incident and our response out of an abundance of caution.

**What Happened.** On March 17, 2023, Essen learned that an unauthorized actor may have accessed its systems and obtained a limited amount of system information. The electronic health record system that Essen uses for storage of medical records was not affected. Upon discovering this incident, we immediately took steps to contain the incident. We then launched an investigation with the assistance of third-party cybersecurity specialists to determine the nature and scope of the incident. We also notified federal law enforcement. The investigation found that an unauthorized actor accessed certain Essen systems between March 14, 2023, and March 22, 2023, and may have accessed or copied certain information maintained within the Essen environment. Essen reviewed the data to understand what type of information it contained and to whom it related. Essen recently completed this review and confirmed that personal information and/or PHI relating to certain individuals was affected by this incident.

**What Information Was Affected.** The information included in the affected files varied by individual, and contained, as applicable, individuals’ names, Social Security number, driver’s license or state identification number, US Alien Registration number, non-US identification number, passport number, date of birth, diagnosis, financial account information, health insurance information, lab results, medical history, medical record number, medical treatment, patient account number, patient identification number, physician, and/or prescription information.

**What We are Doing.** We take this incident and the obligation to safeguard the information in our care seriously. In response to this incident, we moved took steps to further secure our environment.

We previously notified potentially affected individuals on May 16, 2023 by posting notification of this event on this website. Now that the review efforts are complete, we are notifying affected individuals via this supplemental notification on our website, providing notice to relevant media outlets, and mailing letters to individuals for whom Essen has address information. We are also notifying the three major consumer reporting agencies (*i.e.*, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion) and state and federal authorities as required.

**What Affected Individuals Can Do.** Although we are unaware of any identity theft or fraud occurring as a result of this event, individuals are encouraged to remain vigilant against incidents of identity theft or fraud by reviewing account statements and explanations of benefits and monitoring free credit reports for suspicious activity over the next 12 – 24 months. Any suspicious activity should be reported to the appropriate insurance company, health care provider, financial institution, or to law enforcement. Additional resources can be found below in the *Steps You Can Take to Protect Personal Information*.

**For More Information.** If you have additional questions, you may contact our dedicated assistance line toll-free at (866) 347-5981. This toll-free line is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time (excluding major U.S. holidays). You may also write to Essen at 2626 Halperin Ave, Bronx, NY 10461, ATTN: Privacy Officer.

### *Steps You Can Take to Protect Personal Information*

#### **Monitor Your Accounts**

Under U.S. law, a consumer is entitled to one free credit report annually from each of the three major credit reporting bureaus, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. To order a free credit report, visit [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or call, toll-free, 1-877-322-8228. Consumers may also directly contact the three major credit reporting bureaus listed below to request a free copy of their credit report.

Consumers have the right to place an initial or extended “fraud alert” on a credit file at no cost. An initial fraud alert is a 1-year alert that is placed on a consumer’s credit file. Upon seeing a fraud alert display on a consumer’s credit file, a business is required to take steps to verify the consumer’s identity before extending new credit. If consumers are the victim of identity theft, they are entitled to an extended fraud alert, which is a fraud alert lasting seven years. Should consumers wish to place a fraud alert, please contact any of the three major credit reporting bureaus listed below.

As an alternative to a fraud alert, consumers have the right to place a “credit freeze” on a credit report, which will prohibit a credit bureau from releasing information in the credit report without the consumer’s express authorization. The credit freeze is designed to prevent credit, loans, and services from being approved in a consumer’s name without consent. However, consumers should be aware that using a credit freeze to take control over who gets access to the personal and financial information in their credit report may delay, interfere with, or prohibit the timely approval of any subsequent request or application they make regarding a new loan, credit, mortgage, or any other account involving the extension of credit. Pursuant to federal law, consumers cannot be charged to place or lift a credit freeze on their credit report. To request a credit freeze, individuals may need to provide some or all of the following information:

1. Full name (including middle initial as well as Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.);
2. Social Security number;
3. Date of birth;
4. Addresses for the prior two to five years;
5. Proof of current address, such as a current utility bill or telephone bill;
6. A legible photocopy of a government-issued identification card (state driver’s license or ID card, etc.); and
7. A copy of either the police report, investigative report, or complaint to a law enforcement agency concerning identity theft if they are a victim of identity theft.

Should consumers wish to place a credit freeze or fraud alert, please contact the three major credit reporting bureaus listed below:

| <b>Equifax</b>  | <b>Experian</b>   | <b>TransUnion</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <a href="https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/">https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/</a> | <a href="https://www.experian.com/help/">https://www.experian.com/help/</a> | <a href="https://www.transunion.com/credit-help">https://www.transunion.com/credit-help</a> |
| 1-888-298-0045  | 1-888-397-3742  | 1-800-916-8800  |
| Equifax Fraud Alert, P.O. Box 105069 Atlanta, GA 30348-5069   | Experian Fraud Alert, P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013                        | TransUnion Fraud Alert, P.O. Box 2000, Chester, PA 19016                                    |
| Equifax Credit Freeze, P.O. Box 105788 Atlanta, GA 30348-5788   | Experian Credit Freeze, P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013                      | TransUnion Credit Freeze, P.O. Box 160, Woodlyn, PA 19094                                   |

### **Additional Information**

Consumers may further educate themselves regarding identity theft, fraud alerts, credit freezes, and the steps they can take to protect your personal information by contacting the consumer reporting bureaus, the Federal Trade Commission, or their state Attorney General. The Federal Trade Commission may be reached at: 600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20580; [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov); 1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338); and TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The Federal Trade Commission also encourages those who discover that their information has been misused to file a complaint with them. Consumers can obtain further information on how to file such a complaint by way of the contact information listed above. Consumers have the right to file a police report if they ever experience identity theft or fraud. Please note that in order to file a report with law enforcement for identity theft, consumers will likely need to provide some proof that they have been a victim. Instances of known or suspected identity theft should also be reported to law enforcement and the relevant state Attorney General. This notice has not been delayed by law enforcement.

*For District of Columbia residents*, the District of Columbia Attorney General may be contacted at: 400 6th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001; (202) 442-9828; and [oag.dc.gov](http://oag.dc.gov).

*For Maryland residents*, the Maryland Attorney General may be contacted at: 200 St. Paul Place, 16th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202; 1-410-576-6300 or 1-888-743-0023; and <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/>.

*For New Mexico residents*, consumers have rights pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, such as the right to be told if information in their credit file has been used against them, the right to know what is in their credit file, the right to ask for their credit score, and the right to dispute incomplete or inaccurate information. Further, pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the consumer reporting bureaus must correct or delete inaccurate, incomplete, or unverifiable information; consumer reporting agencies may not report outdated negative information; access to consumers' files is limited; consumers must give consent for credit reports to be provided to employers; consumers may limit "prescreened" offers of credit and insurance based on information in their credit report; and consumers may seek damages from violators. Consumers may have additional rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act not summarized here. Identity theft victims and active-duty military personnel have specific additional rights pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

We encourage consumers to review their rights pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act by visiting [www.consumerfinance.gov/f/201504\\_cfpb\\_summary\\_your-rights-under-fcra.pdf](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/f/201504_cfpb_summary_your-rights-under-fcra.pdf), or by writing Consumer Response Center, Room 130-A, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580.

*For New York residents*, the New York Attorney General may be contacted at: Office of the Attorney General, The Capitol, Albany, NY 12224-0341; 1-800-771-7755; or <https://ag.ny.gov>.

*For North Carolina residents*, the North Carolina Attorney General may be contacted at: 9001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-9001; 1-877-566-7226 or 1-919-716-6000; and [www.ncdoj.gov](http://www.ncdoj.gov).

*For Rhode Island residents*, the Rhode Island Attorney General may be reached at: 150 South Main Street, Providence, RI 02903; [www.riag.ri.gov](http://www.riag.ri.gov); and 1-401-274-4400. Under Rhode Island law, individuals have the right to obtain any police report filed in regard to this event. There are approximately [#] Rhode Island residents that may be impacted by this event.