



News Release

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DGS Notifies 20 Virginia Families after Personal Information Inadvertently Released

RICHMOND, VA – The Department of General Services (DGS) has sent notification to 20 Virginia families whose personal medical information was inadvertently released to a private individual due to a clerical error.

The information was included on newborn screening test results that inadvertently were faxed on July 21, 2017, to the private individual's residence rather than the intended physician's office. The individual who received the records promptly notified the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, and the transmitted documents were retrieved by courier in approximately three hours.

The personally identifiable information potentially included the mother's and baby's names and dates of birth, baby's address, patient ID number, medical record number, time of birth, hospital name, physician name, date of specimen collection and submittal, and the laboratory test results. These records did not include Social Security Numbers.

The Department of General Services sent certified letters to notify each affected family and provided a toll-free number for them to obtain more information. Members of the general public who have questions should call (804) 786-0282.

“We sincerely apologize for this inadvertent release of personal information and for any concern this incident may cause these families. Given that the recipient of the information alerted us to the error, cooperated fully, and promptly returned the documents, we have no reason to believe that the information contained in the records will be misused, but as a

precaution we advised parents to monitor their account statements and credit reports closely and report any suspicious activity,” said **Chris Beschler, Director of the Department of General Services**. “Our laboratory is committed to providing secure, timely newborn screening test results, and we have reviewed our processes to determine how we can prevent this from happening again.”

Virginia’s mandatory newborn screening program is a partnership between the Department of General Services’ Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services and the Virginia Department of Health. Five drops of blood taken by pricking a baby’s heel are used to screen for 29 disorders that range from the well-known Cystic Fibrosis, to the relatively obscure metabolic disorder known as Maple Syrup Urine Disease. Babies with these disorders often look healthy at birth, but failure to diagnose these disorders early can lead to severe sickness, physical or mentally disabilities, or death.

Virginia’s laboratory receives approximately 120,000 samples and performs more than 4 million newborn screening tests annually. More information about the newborn screening program can be found at www.dgs.virginia.gov.

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