

# COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

May 6, 2013

Michael A. Delaney  
Attorney General  
New Hampshire Department of Justice  
Office of the Attorney General  
33 Capitol St.  
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Re: Breach Notification

Attorney General Delaney:

On March 15, 2013 Columbia University Medical Center of Columbia University ("CUMC") was informed that a file containing personal information of 407 medical students from the graduating classes of years 2008, 2009 and 2013 had been released inadvertently to Columbia students, faculty, and staff via email. One (1) New Hampshire residents were among those affected. The email and file contained the graduating medical students' residency match list, an Excel file, which included a hidden column containing some social security numbers ("SSNs"). The CUMC Information Security Office ("CUMC-IT") detected the email shortly after it was released, and CUMC-IT took immediate action to contain the flow and copy of the sensitive data contained therein. This action included blocking the additional forwarding of emails containing the Excel file, and the deletion of emails from the email server. The security incident was unintentional, and we have no evidence of wrongdoing or identity theft.

The one (1) New Hampshire residents was notified by letter on April 19, 2013 (see sample letter attached). In the letter, CUMC offers the affected individuals, at no cost to them, identity theft protection services as a safeguard against the possibility of misuse of personal information. These services will include 12 months of credit monitoring, \$1,000,000 in insurance in the case of identity fraud, and access to credit assistance in the event of any suspected identity theft.

CUMC deeply regrets that this incident occurred. We are keenly aware of how important it is to safeguard information entrusted to our organization. In response, we have taken step to ensure that the situation is not repeated.

Should your office wish to contact us for further information or questions, please contact me at the phone number, email address, or regular address indicated in this letter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrice M. Le Melle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Patrice M. Le Melle  
Associate General Counsel  
Columbia University  
Email: [pml@gc.columbia.edu](mailto:pml@gc.columbia.edu),

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

P&S Office of Medical Education  
630 W. 168<sup>th</sup> St., P&S 3-401  
NY, NY 10032

5/6/2013

<<First\_Name>> <<Last\_Name>>  
<<Addr\_Line\_1>>  
<<Addr\_Line\_2>>  
<<Addr\_Line\_3>>  
<<City>>, <<State>> <<Postal\_Code>>

Dear <<First\_Name>> <<Last\_Name>>:

On March 15, 2013, Columbia University Medical Center was informed that a file containing personal information of 138 current medical students from the 2013 graduating class was released inadvertently to Columbia students, faculty and staff. Subsequently, it was discovered that an additional 120 graduating medical students in 2008 and 149 graduating medical students in 2009 had their personal information released in their graduating year from P&S to Columbia students, faculty and staff.

We are writing to inform you that your name and Social Security number may have been exposed.

The email and file contained the 2013 graduating medical students' residency match List. This list, an Excel file, included a hidden column that contained some Social Security numbers. During our investigation into this breach, we learned that distribution of the previous graduating class residency match lists contained the same hidden column in 2008 and 2009. The 2013 email containing the sensitive data was detected shortly after being released, and Columbia University Medical Center took immediate action to contain the flow and copy of the sensitive data. This action included blocking the additional forwarding of emails with the Excel file, and the deletion of emails from the email server.

The security incident was unintentional, and we have no evidence of wrongdoing or identity theft. However, we are making this notification so that you can take extra precautions related to identity theft and your personal credit.

To safeguard against the possibility of misuse of personal information, Columbia has arranged for you to receive a one-year subscription to the Experian's<sup>®</sup> ProtectMyID<sup>®</sup> Alert product, a credit monitoring system, at no cost to you. This product will provide you with a free copy of your Experian credit report, monitor your credit files at all three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and Trans Union), notify you of certain suspicious activities that could indicate identity theft, provide \$1,000,000 in insurance in the case of identity fraud and provide assistance in the event of any suspected identity theft.

**Important:** If you wish to enroll in the Experian product, you may do so by calling Experian toll-free at 877-371-7902 or visiting their website, [www.protectmyid.com/redeem](http://www.protectmyid.com/redeem), and entering the following unique, personal redemption code:

<<Experian\_Code#>>

To take advantage of this coverage, you must enroll by **06-30-2013**.

Even if you do not wish to enroll in the Experian service, there are other steps you can take to help protect yourself, as noted in the attachment titled "Information about Identity Theft Prevention."

Information security is a serious issue for the University, as we know it is for you. Columbia continues to strengthen its measures to protect sensitive information, including the implementation of additional tools to search and secure sensitive information.

**Your complimentary 12-month ProtectMyID membership includes:**

- **Credit Report:** A free copy of your Experian credit report
- **Daily 3 Bureau Credit Monitoring:** Alerts you of suspicious activity including new inquiries, newly opened accounts, delinquencies, or medical collections found on your Experian, Equifax® and TransUnion® credit reports.
- **Identity Theft Resolution:** If you have been a victim of identity theft, you will be assigned a dedicated, U.S.-based Experian Identity Theft Resolution Agent who will walk you through the fraud resolution process, from start to finish.
- **ExtendCARE:** Full access to the same personalized assistance from a highly-trained Fraud Resolution Agent even after your initial ProtectMyID membership expires.
- **\$1 Million Identity Theft Insurance\*:** As a ProtectMyID member, you are immediately covered by a \$1 Million insurance policy that can help you cover certain costs including, lost wages, private investigator fees, and unauthorized electronic fund transfers.

We sincerely apologize for this incident. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us by calling 212-305-4574.

Sincerely,



Ronald Drusin  
Vice Dean for Education  
College of Physicians and Surgeons  
Columbia University



Lisa Mellman  
Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs  
College of Physicians and Surgeons  
Columbia University

Enclosure

\* Identity theft insurance is underwritten by insurance company subsidiaries or affiliates of Chartis, Inc. The description herein is a summary and intended for informational purposes only and does not include all terms, conditions and exclusions of the policies described. Please refer to the actual policies for terms, conditions, and exclusions of coverage. Coverage may not be available in all jurisdictions.

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DEPT OF JUSTICE  
FBI STATE