

Los Angeles County DHS reveals 168,000 patient data breach



By Patrick Ouellette March 07, 2014 - The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) recently announced that it has begun notifying 168,000 patients of a **data breach at Sutherland Healthcare Solutions**, which handles DHS's billing and collections.

Sutherland has multiple offices and, according to the DHS release, its Torrance office was broken into on February 5 and computer equipment that held patients' first and last names, Social Security numbers and certain medical and billing information, and may have included birthdates, addresses and diagnoses. "I'm not aware of another breach of this significance ever having occurred," said Los Angeles County Assistant Auditor-Controller Robert Campbell, who oversees the county's compliance with federal medical privacy regulations, **to the Los Angeles Times**.

In its statement, DHS said it is taking the incident seriously and is taking the necessary precautions to protect all patient related information from theft or criminal activity.

We and Los Angeles County are actively working with law enforcement. Los Angeles County will be notifying the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. In addition, we are reviewing our policies and procedures and have provided additional training to our workforce. Los Angeles County is also working with us to review our information privacy and security program and determine whether enhancements should be made.

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Campbell told the *Times* that Sutherland notified DHS of the breach on Feb. 10, but didn't know how many patients were involved with the breach.

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