



September 3, 2021

Dear Friends of Desert Wells Family Medicine,

As you may be aware, our IT system has been down for several weeks. We value our relationship with you and serving as a trusted health care provider to our community over the past 20 years. We are writing to you today to share the most updated information on this incident, our efforts to bring our systems back online, and our practice's path forward.

On May 21, 2021, Desert Wells Family Medicine experienced a ransomware incident that impacted many of our IT systems. We moved quickly to investigate and respond, including by engaging cybersecurity experts and a leading incident response team to assist us. Federal law enforcement was notified and a third-party IT forensics firm launched an investigation to determine what, if any information was accessed and acquired by the unauthorized individual. To date, these independent firms have determined there was no evidence that any sensitive data was taken.

Unfortunately, we have come to understand that the unauthorized individual that accessed our network corrupted the data. Upon discovering the extent of the damage, we engaged additional forensics and recovery services as part of our exhaustive efforts to do everything we could to try and recover the data. Unfortunately, these efforts to date have been unsuccessful and patient electronic records before May 21, 2021, are unrecoverable. The security and privacy of our patients' data is something we take very seriously and, while we had backups in place, that data was also corrupted by the unauthorized individual. Moving forward, we are continuing to make every effort to compile our patients' data from other sources, including from medical specialists, previous medical providers, hospitals, pharmacies, imaging centers, and labs, among others. We ask for your understanding as we will request patients to update necessary forms during this process.

Although there is no evidence that any of the information involved has been or will be misused, we are offering patients complimentary credit monitoring and identity theft protection services. More information about how to sign up for this service, as well as additional resources available to you, will be included in a notification letter we are mailing to you. Additional information is also available on our website: Desertwellsfamilymedicine.com. If you have questions, please feel free to contact a dedicated, external call center we set up at 1-833-903-3648, available Monday through Friday, between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. PST.

As we have always been since the beginning of our practice 20 years ago, Desert Wells Family Medicine remains committed to providing excellent healthcare to our community. Despite this challenging situation, we continue to care for our patients using downtime processes and manual practices we have in place, and we have hired additional employees and other resources to support our patients' needs. In addition, we are expending every effort to rebuild patients' health records in a new and enhanced electronic medical record system.

We recognize this is an upsetting situation and, from my family to yours, sincerely apologize for any concern this may cause. I'm sure many of you have been reading about other healthcare providers in the community, and around the country, that have been impacted by cybersecurity events. For our part, we are continuing to take steps to enhance the security of our systems and the data entrusted to us, including by implementing enhanced endpoint detection and 24/7 threat monitoring, and providing additional training and education to our staff.

We thank our loyal patients for your patience and understanding, as we continue to work day and night to bring you the high quality care and service you deserve.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures of David B. Hays. The first is a cursive signature, and the second is a more stylized, bold cursive signature.

