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LAWSON NSW 2783
4759 1111
admin@lawsonmedical.com.au

Lawson Medical Practice

20th March, 2025

Dear patients and colleagues,

LAWSON MEDICAL PRACTICE

Notice of eligible data breach

We are writing to inform you of a cyber incident affecting the Lawson Medical Practice.

We are sorry to report that our practice has become one of many Australian organisations affected by a cyber hack. Based on the information available to us, we have reason to believe that your personal information may have been accessed by unknown persons.

We would like to thank members of our community who contacted us to report their receipt of a spam email on 3 March 2025. Due to the high volume of calls and emails that we received, we were unable to contact you individually. However, we sent an SMS to all our patients and posted a message on our Facebook page the same day advising recipients not to open the email.

It has taken some time to fully investigate and assess what has happened. We have engaged an information technology services provider to understand, as best we can, the circumstances surrounding this incident.

From those investigations, it is apparent to us that the only email account which has been affected is lawsonmedical@gmail.com.

This email account contained:

- Emails sent from that account between 8 May 2024 and 2 March 2025
- Emails received into that account between 23 July 2024 and 2 March 2025
- Workcover correspondence received and sent from that account between 21 April 2023 and 11 July 2024
- Correspondence for residents of Bodington Aged Care Facility received and sent between 2 April 2022 and 11 July 2024

This notice provides you with further details of what happened, what kinds of personal information was potentially accessed and what steps you can take.

Our investigations indicate that:

On 3 March 2025 at 7:27am, our colleagues and patients received a suspicious email, impersonating Dr Catherine Harman. The email was sent from an email address which is not associated with our practice. An example of the email is:


Lawson Medical has sent you files.

Message from Lawson

I hope this email finds you well.

Kindly find the attached for your attention and feedback at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Dr. Catherine Harman
General practitioner
www.lawsonmedical.com.au

View

Investigations indicate that hacker gained access to the affected email account and exported email addresses from that account. The spam email was sent to the exported email addresses.

We have reported this to the Australian Cyber Security Centre, NSW Police as well as the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Whilst we have no evidence that the hacker accessed other personal information in the affected email account (aside from the exported email addresses) it remains a possibility. This may have included personal information about you, or other individuals on whose behalf you have acted, depending on how you have interacted with us such as:

- names
- dates of birth
- Medicare card numbers
- addresses
- telephone numbers
- health information

Our investigation confirms that the following information was **not contained in the email account:**

- correspondence sent or received to other practice email accounts
- patient electronic records system (including medical records and electronic prescriptions)
- online appointment bookings system
- payment systems including credit card details
- My Health Record
- driver's licence details

We acknowledge and apologise for the distress this may cause you. We strongly advise that you consider taking the precautions outlined below to safeguard identity and to minimise the impact this may have on you:

- if you are a current or former patient of our medical practice and you believe your Medicare card number was contained in an email sent or received from this affected email account, contact Services Australia on 1800 941 126. They can assist you with:
    - getting a replacement Medicare card, which will have a new number and expiry date;
    - adding a secret password to your Medicare records. This will provide an extra level of authentication;
    - locking access to your online Medicare account, the Express Plus mobile apps or phone self-service functionality;
    - cancelling your Medicare online account and Express Plus mobile apps; and
    - placing additional authentication measures in place (e.g. additional security questions which must be answered) if your Medicare number has been compromised;
- check for suspicious activity on your myGov account. The myGov website at https://my.gov.au contains details on how to view your myGov account history. If you find anything suspicious, you can call Services Australia's Scams and Identity Theft Help Desk on 1800 941 126;
    - ask for a credit report from agencies such as Equifax, illion and Experian, to see whether someone has attempted to apply for credit in your name. Further

information on how to do this is available at: https://www.idcare.org/fact-sheets/credit-reports-australia;

- call the Australian Cyber Security Hotline on 1300 292 371. This is run by the Australian Cyber Security Centre (a Commonwealth government agency), whose website at https://www.cyber.gov.au also contains useful tips on how you might protect yourself, whether online or with your devices;
- call ID Care on 1800 595 160. ID Care is a not-for-profit organisation which helps people with identity and cybersecurity concerns, and their website at https://www.idcare.org also contains useful tips on how you can further protect yourself against scams, fake texts and phishing exercises;
- visit the website of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, at https://www.oaic.gov.au for helpful 'Data breach support and resources';
- visit the website of the Australian Government's ScamWatch at https://www.scamwatch.gov.au for helpful tips on how to spot a scam. You can also subscribe to receive email alerts about new scams and scam trends;
    - maintain vigilance for suspicious texts, emails or phone calls you may receive, including by:
    - being alert for any phishing scams that may come to you by phone, post or email;
    - carefully reviewing any communications you receive to ensure they are legitimate;
    - being careful when opening or responding to texts from unknown or suspicious numbers; and
    - regularly updating your passwords with 'strong' passwords, not re-using passwords and activating multi-factor authentication on any online accounts, where available;
    - contact the eSafety Commissioner on https://esafety.gov.au/about-up/how-we-can-help for tips on how you can protect yourself from online abuse;
    - speak with your GP or Beyond Blue for support if this has caused you distress: https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/contact-us or 1300 224 636; and
    - consider taking other precautionary measures such as:

- securing your electronic devices and monitoring for unusual activity;
- using a password manager (examples include LastPass or NordPass) to create and store strong, complex passwords;
- varying the secret questions and answers that you use to verify yourself online;
- checking your email and other online accounts for unusual activity, such as requests to change account details or passwords that you have not made; and
- referring to the further advice available from the New South Wales Cybercrime Unit at https://www.nsw.gov.au/id-support-nsw.

Update on preferred communications with the practice:

We request that further email communications with the practice be sent to admin@lawsonmedical.com.au.

Our preferred communication with Specialist rooms is via Healthlink.

Referral letters for patients will be sent with encryption requiring a PIN for access and will be sent from the address noreplylawsonmedical@gmail.com.

Pathology referrals for Australian Clinical Labs can either be provided on paper forms to our pathology collection service at the practice or will be sent by QR code to patient mobile phone numbers.

If you have any concerns or require more specific information, please contact the practice on admin@lawsonmedical.com.au or 02 4759 1111 and ask to speak directly with either myself or our practice manager, Kirralee Newby.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Dr Catherine Harman
Lawson Medical Practice