

**Date:** February 01,2024

**To:** Social Security Advocacy Services Grantees

**From:** Social Security Advocacy Services (SSAS) Contract Manager

**RE:** NEW procedure for unencrypted email violations

Effective immediately, any emails that contain protected private client data (client name, date of birth, Social Security number, etc.) that are not sent using encryption software to any DHS employee will be considered a Data Privacy Incident as defined in your contract with DHS under Clause 10 and in Attachment A. The next time a Data Privacy Incident occurs, DHS and the SSAS grantee will be required to complete a [Data Privacy Incident Report Form](#) which includes acknowledgements and action steps that must be taken. Failure to resolve data privacy incidents and repeated violations may result in contract termination and/or impact future contract consideration.

It is critical that emails containing protected private client data are encrypted before they are sent to any DHS employee or anyone else. All SSAS grantees are required to have email encryption capabilities in place per contract Attachment A, Section 2.2.C.4. Sending protected private client data without using unencrypted email is a serious violation and exposes private client data to unauthorized parties that may not be retractable and/or result in the misuse of client information.

DHS has provided [reminders](#) in the past to all SSAS grantees and has offered reasonable methods to comply with the use of encrypted emails. If you do not have email encryption software and you need to send client data securely to DHS, call or send a regular email to your SSAS coordinator requesting an encrypted email. Your SSAS coordinator will then send you an encrypted email in which you can respond back with protected private client data. See our [tip sheet](#) on how to access and reply to DHS encrypted emails.

The work that you do is important to our clients; however, we must also protect our client's personal information for Social Security Advocacy Services to continue effectively. We appreciate all your efforts and partnership to ensure that all email communications with protected private client data is only exchanged with DHS securely.

Please contact Nou Vang, Contracts Manager, with any questions or concerns at: [nou.vang@state.mn.us](mailto:nou.vang@state.mn.us) or call 651-431-5756.