



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

November 18, 2010

Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Sebelius and Attorney General Holder:

We write to you today to commend your efforts to fight identity theft. Like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the American Medical Association (AMA) is committed to combating patient and physician identity theft.

The incidence of physician identity theft continues to grow with the use of electronically available information. Since 2007, physician privacy has been compromised by public access to physicians' personal and professional information through the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES), which includes National Provider Identifier (NPI) information. Protecting physician privacy and decreasing identity theft would ensure that fewer tax dollars are squandered by fraudulent actors.

We believe that physicians should be educated about where to turn if they believe they are a victim of identity theft. We suggest a collaboration between HHS, DOJ, the AMA, and other federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over physician identity theft prevention and reporting. We believe it would be highly productive to collaborate on a concise pamphlet or 'toolkit' to help physicians identify the relevant authorities to contact. We currently provide a general resource pamphlet to physicians (enclosed) that may serve as a model for a new, updated toolkit with your input. Further, we think that a streamlined process for identity theft reporting, as well as inter-agency communication regarding reports, would be a constructive product of the proposed agency collaboration. Ideally, the agencies would partner on the establishment of a single ombudsman to guide physicians through the reporting process and assist them in reclaiming their identity.

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Please let us know if you would be interested in collaborating with the AMA and other agencies on the subject of physician identity theft. Our Washington contact for this issue is Margaret Garikes, Director of Federal Affairs, who you may contact at margaret.garikes@ama-assn.org or (202) 789-7400. We look forward to working with you to effectively combat physician identity theft.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA

Enclosure

cc: Peter Budetti
Daniel R. Levinson
Robert S. Mueller, III
Lanny A. Breuer
Greg Andres