

## Report on Patient Privacy Volume 21, Number 5. May 06, 2021 Privacy Briefs: May 2021

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◆ An investigation by a Pittsburgh-based television news team discovered that health and other personal information of about 70,000 people collected during COVID-19 contact tracing have been compromised.<sup>[1]</sup> Multiple investigations are underway by the Pennsylvania Health Department and the company hired to collect the information and data, according to WPXI-TV. The reporter who discovered the breach, Rick Earle, said he was able to view the spreadsheet-based information, which contained names, phone numbers and health information collected from contacts between September 2020 and March 2021. Insight Global, a staffing company based in Atlanta, received a \$23 million contract to hire 1,000 contact tracers, and some former employees told Earle that the company failed to secure the information they collected. Live web links to the personal information were shut down the day after Earle reached out to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Insight Global released a statement on the breach that stated: “We regret that information collected by our employees during COVID-19 contact tracing may have been made accessible to persons beyond authorized employees and public health officials. Our first priority has been to secure and prevent any further access to or disclosure of information.” Insight Global said it is investigating and that the information potentially breached “consisted of names of individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and a range of information designed to help manage the spread of the virus, and identify and address any needs for specific social support services.” The Pennsylvania Department of Health said it will not be renewing its contract with Insight Global and said the company’s employees “created unauthorized documents outside of the secure data systems.”

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