

Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,
Welzijn en Sport

Return address: PO Box 20350, 2500 EJ The Hague

To the President of the House of Representatives
of the States General
PO Box 20018
2500 EA The Hague

Directorate

Public health
Public Health (PG)
Team B

Visiting address

Parnassus Square 5
2511 VX The Hague
T 070 340 79 11
F 070 340 78 34
www.rijksoverheid.nl

Feature

4184189-1086597-PG

Sender ID

Attachment(s)

Datum 11 augustus 2025
Re Data breach at BVO cervical cancer laboratory

*Please send correspondence
exclusively to the return address,
quoting the date and reference
number of this letter.*

Dear Mr President,

On August 6th, the Dutch Population Survey (BVO NL) was informed of a data breach at a laboratory involved in the cervical cancer screening program. As reported by BVO NL¹, the laboratory in question was Clinical Diagnostics NMDL (a subsidiary of Eurofins), which discovered on July 6th that its information system had been hacked. This laboratory analyzes, among other things, cervical smears and self-collection tests on behalf of BVO NL. Data from over 485,000 participants in the cervical cancer screening program was obtained. The exact extent of the data breach is currently unclear. Pending the outcome of ongoing research, BVO NL, in consultation with the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), has decided to suspend its collaboration with this laboratory. On behalf of the State Secretary for Youth, Prevention and Sport, I am informing the House of Representatives in this letter about this data breach and the measures yet to be taken. I will also address the potential impact on participants in the cervical cancer screening program.

First of all, I would like to say that I very much regret that the data of participants have been leaked. Primarily for the participants directly affected by this data breach. It can have a major impact if your personal data falls into the wrong hands. I fully understand that participants are concerned about this and therefore have many questions. Participating in the cervical cancer screening program is nerve-wracking enough. Participants in the cervical cancer screening program must be able to trust that their personal data is secure. I emphasize again that participation in the screening program is of great importance. The goal of the cervical cancer screening program is to reduce mortality from cervical cancer or its precancerous stages by detecting it at an early stage. Early detection can prevent cervical cancer from developing or allow for better treatment. As a result, fewer people die from cervical cancer.

¹ See the news item from BVO NL at www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl

Together with the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) and BVO NL, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) is working hard to establish the facts regarding the data breach and take the necessary measures. BVO NL, in collaboration with the RIVM, is currently informing all participants personally by letter. Ideally, those affected would have been informed before the news broke in the media. However, sending such a large number of letters takes time, and they won't reach everyone, or not everyone at the same time. Therefore, we are now informing the public as broadly as possible, including through the media and this letter to Parliament.

Feature
4184189-1086597-PG

Description of the situation

The data breach in the laboratory's information system was discovered on July 6. Cybercriminals have obtained the personal data of over 100 people through a hack 485,000 participants in the cervical cancer screening program obtained. This concerns personal data and special personal data such as name, address, citizen service number, telephone numbers, email addresses, and test results.

BVO NL, in coordination with the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment), has launched an independent investigation into the exact scope and cause of this hack. BVO NL is also examining whether and how the laboratory should have taken further measures to prevent hacks or mitigate their consequences. In addition, the laboratory's information system is being assessed to determine whether it is sufficiently secure for processing new test results. Pending the outcome of this investigation, BVO NL, in consultation with the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), has decided to suspend its collaboration with this laboratory until further notice. BVO NL estimates that a temporary suspension of collaboration will not jeopardize the continuity of screening.

In order not to adversely affect this ongoing investigation and any potential follow-up steps, such as a potential report from BVO NL, I cannot provide any further information about the hack itself at this time.

Measures

To gain more insight into the scale of the problem and to limit the consequences of the hack as much as possible, BVO NL, together with the RIVM and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, has initiated the following:

- A crisis team has been set up.
- BVO NL has reported this to the Dutch Data Protection Authority and the Health and Youth Care Inspectorate.
- The RIVM has contacted the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC) with the request for assistance.
- As described above, BVO NL has coordinated with the RIVM has launched an independent investigation into the exact scope and cause of this hack. Pending this investigation, collaboration with the laboratory has been temporarily suspended.

Participants in the cervical cancer screening program who were affected by the data breach will be personally informed by the RIVM and BVO NL. The RIVM and BVO NL expect to send a letter by mail early next week.

- The BVO NL customer contact center has been scaled up, and participants in the cervical cancer screening program who have questions can contact BVO NL2.

Feature
4184189-1086597-PG

With the above measures, I hope that BVO NL and the RIVM can limit the negative consequences of the data breach as much as possible and that we can work together on structural solutions for the future.

Impact on participants : The

personal and sensitive data of over 485,000 participants in the cervical cancer screening program have been compromised. I deeply regret this. I realize that this data breach could impact the trust in such government programs and the government itself for all participants in the cervical cancer screening program or other screening programs. Therefore, I am committed to ensuring that participants are informed as fully as possible about the hack. For questions, concerns, and/or other comments, participants can contact the BVO NL customer contact center as of today. In addition, participants affected by the hack will be informed by letter shortly by BVO NL, in coordination with the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment).

Finally

I want to emphasize that the data breach did not affect the results of the cervical cancer screening program. Furthermore, I want to emphasize that BVO NL estimates that a temporary suspension of the collaboration will not jeopardize the continuity of the screening program. As the body responsible for the system, I am working with BVO NL and the RIVM to minimize the damage caused by this data breach. Once again, I deeply regret that the data of participants in the cervical cancer screening program has been leaked.

I realise that this has an impact on participants in population surveys.
I will inform your Chamber again as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

the Minister of Health,
Wellbeing and Sports,

Danielle Jansen

Participants in the cervical cancer screening program can contact BVO NL with questions and/or concerns by phone, email, and social media: <https://www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/contact/>.
