

# **County of Santa Clara**

## **Countywide Email Marketing Software**

### **Annual Surveillance Report**

#### **July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

#### **1. Description of How the Technology Was Used**

Consistent with the Countywide Surveillance Use Policy, the County of Santa Clara departments regularly inform employees, members of the public, and other stakeholders about policies, new services, technology upgrades, upcoming events, and other significant matters via email campaigns.

During the time period covered under this Annual Report, from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, County Departments utilized Email Marketing Software to:

- Inform stakeholders of updates related to the COVID-19 pandemic response;
- Inform community-based organizations and stakeholders of updates and trainings related to substance use prevention services;
- Disseminate news to media and various community members, including advisories, press releases, media statements, and newsletters about County of Santa Clara programs, services, press conferences, County events and activities, and relevant news;
- Inform the external vendor community, stakeholders, and internal staff about upcoming business opportunities, as well as County procurement and contracting-related news;
- Inform County employees about open enrollment, training courses, and employee resources via a monthly Learning Connect internal newsletter;
- Remind property owners of various property tax bill deadlines throughout the year;
- Create email templates to distribute information about employment opportunities both internally and externally;
- Create job interest forms posted on various County department websites to collect names, emails, phone numbers, comments and areas of interest to assist in recruiting for department specific position vacancies;
- Disseminate monthly and bi-monthly newsletters for educational purposes;
- Send mass communications to constituents and members of the public who had provided their emails when signing up for a digital newsletter;
- Create the layout and content of Green Memes sustainability e-newsletters distributed to all County staff six times per year through the internal email system;
- Send regular information to subscribers related to upcoming meetings and events for Supervisors' Offices;
- Send monthly newsletters to stakeholders of the Vietnamese American Services Center;
- Send the Valley Health Plan newsletter to Covered California brokers;
- Remind voters of upcoming election dates and locations of voting centers;
- Send monthly Seniors' Agenda newsletters to subscribers, regarding upcoming events,

- resources, and other items of community interest; and
- Share Senior Nutrition Program updates and information on upcoming community events with participants and other interested parties.

To efficiently manage these email campaigns, it is often necessary to utilize third-party Email Marketing Software (EMS) because (1) the number of recipients often exceeds the limitations of Microsoft Outlook, and (2) EMS is capable of reporting metrics, such as open rates and click rates, that allow departments to measure the level of recipient engagement with each campaign. No personal identifiable information is collected through EMS.

External subscribers are typically added to mailing lists either at in-person outreach events, online through websites, or through the opt-in features within newsletters.

The Valley Health Plan (VHP) used Email Marketing Software (EMS) to send mass email communications providing Covered California brokers with VHP Newsletter. The goal of using EMS is to deliver messages and understand if Covered California brokers interact with the provided Newsletter. VHP has authorized the use of Mailchimp for this purpose. The Mailchimp platform uses approximate geographic location tracking through IP addresses. However, the County department and authorized users do not have access to this data..

## **2. Data Sharing with Outside Entities**

Each Department has a process in place to track requests submitted by outside entities, with designated staff to receive, research and respond to each request. As of June 30, 2023, no data regarding email marketing software was requested by or shared with outside entities.

## **3. Community Complaints or Concerns about the Technology**

If any complaints are received, they are routed to the relevant division or program manager for tracking and response by each Department. As of June 30, 2023, no community complaints or concerns were received about this technology. Also, recipients who wish to be removed from a distribution list(s) may unsubscribe at any time using the unsubscribe feature at the bottom of each email message.

## **4. Audits/Policy Violations**

The Technology Services and Solutions (TSS) department conducted a review with all TSS staff who have access to the Email Marketing Software data. Over the course of the past year, there have been no violations of the Surveillance Use Policy.

VHP has assigned their Chief Business Development Officer to manage the technology. VHP has been using EMS since December 2022 and therefore this is within the SUP data retention requirements of two years. There were no reports of inappropriate use of the EMS system, and no sanctions were necessary related to use of these technologies.

The Surveillance Use Policy has been uploaded to CSCHS policy webpage at HHS Connect to ensure all staff has access to a copy of the Surveillance Use Policy. The Departments using the technology have provided a copy of the SUP to the employees and have obtained their written confirmation that the employees understand it.

## **5. Effectiveness at Achieving Identified Purpose**

The data captured has effectively shown how audiences interact with the various email campaigns throughout the County through high-level non-personal aggregated data. EMS has also been very effective in:

- Disseminating news to and sharing information with both small and very large audiences about a wide variety of programs, services, upcoming events, and resources available across the County;
- Reaching a broader and more consistent audience for many departments;
- Increasing registration/enrollment for training courses, and general awareness of and access to learning resources for employees;
- Communicating tax bill deadline information to registered taxpayers who subscribe to the email delivery system;
- Understanding what sustainability subjects County employees are most interested in based on click rates for embedded links about various projects;
- Distributing information to employees, members of the public, and other stakeholders;
- Educating the public about important public health information; and
- Informing the electorate of upcoming events, trainings, and other significant matters.

Surveillance technology has been effective at achieving its identified purpose of mass email communication with Covered California brokers and providing them with VHP newsletter.

## **6. Public Records Act Requests**

Each Department has a process in place to track Public Records Act requests, with designated staff to receive and respond to each request in coordination with the Office of the County Counsel.

No Departments received Public Records Act requests for Email Marketing Software during the time period covered in this report.

## **7. Costs Incurred from July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

During this reporting period, most County Departments utilized the TSS Department's Countywide EMS account. Funding for this technology is included in the TSS Fiscal year 2022-2023 Adopted Budget. In FY24, TSS is requiring each Department to establish and fund separate EMS accounts.

Funding for the Email Marketing Software (EMS) System was included in department's Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget and cannot be separately identified as an independent cost due to variance among budget categories.

Anticipated cost for the Email Marketing Software (EMS) System in Fiscal year 2024 is \$2,100.