INFORMATION SYSTEMS

LA BioMed Secure Email

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Intended Audience

LA BioMed employees/volunteers with any variation of a labiomed.org, obgyn.humc.edu or emedharbor.edu email address.

Purpose

This document will show the LA BioMed employees/volunteers how to send an encrypted email to an outside organization email address such as joe@gmail.com.

When to Encrypt an Email

Anytime Protect Health Information (PHI) is being communicated outside of the organization via email. Under HIPAA, PHI is defined as "any information about health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care that can be linked to an individual." The 18 identifiers of PHI according to HIPAA 1996:

1. Names;
2. All geographical subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code, if according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census: (1) The geographic unit formed by combining all zip codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and (2) The initial three digits of a zip code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to 000.
3. dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death; and all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older;
4. Phone numbers;
5. Fax numbers;
6. Electronic mail addresses;
7. Social Security numbers(SSN);
8. Medical record numbers;
9. Health plan beneficiary numbers;
10. Account numbers;
11. Certificate/license numbers;
12. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers;
13. Device identifiers and serial numbers;
14. Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);
15. Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers;
16. Biometric identifiers, including finger, retinal and voice prints;
17. Full face photographic images and any comparable images; and
18. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code (note this does not mean the unique code assigned by the investigator to code the data)

HOWTO Send a Secure Email

This is the method for sending a secure email from an LA BioMed email address to an email recipient outside of the LA BioMed organization.

Prerequisites
Any email client that is configured to use the LA BioMed email servers. Examples of email clients include Microsoft Outlook, Entourage, Thunderbird, etc… This also includes LA BioMed webmail https://outlook.labiomed.org and Smart phones that are configured for LA BioMed email.

Sending a Secure Email
There is only one step to encrypt an email and it will work whether you are composing a new email, forwarding an email, or replying to an email.

1. Type either [SECURE MESSAGE] or [SECURE EMAIL] in the subject of the email. See Figure 1.

   Important: Make sure you type either [SECURE MESSAGE] or [SECURE EMAIL] exactly as it appears above including the brackets. It is case sensitive and you must include the brackets!
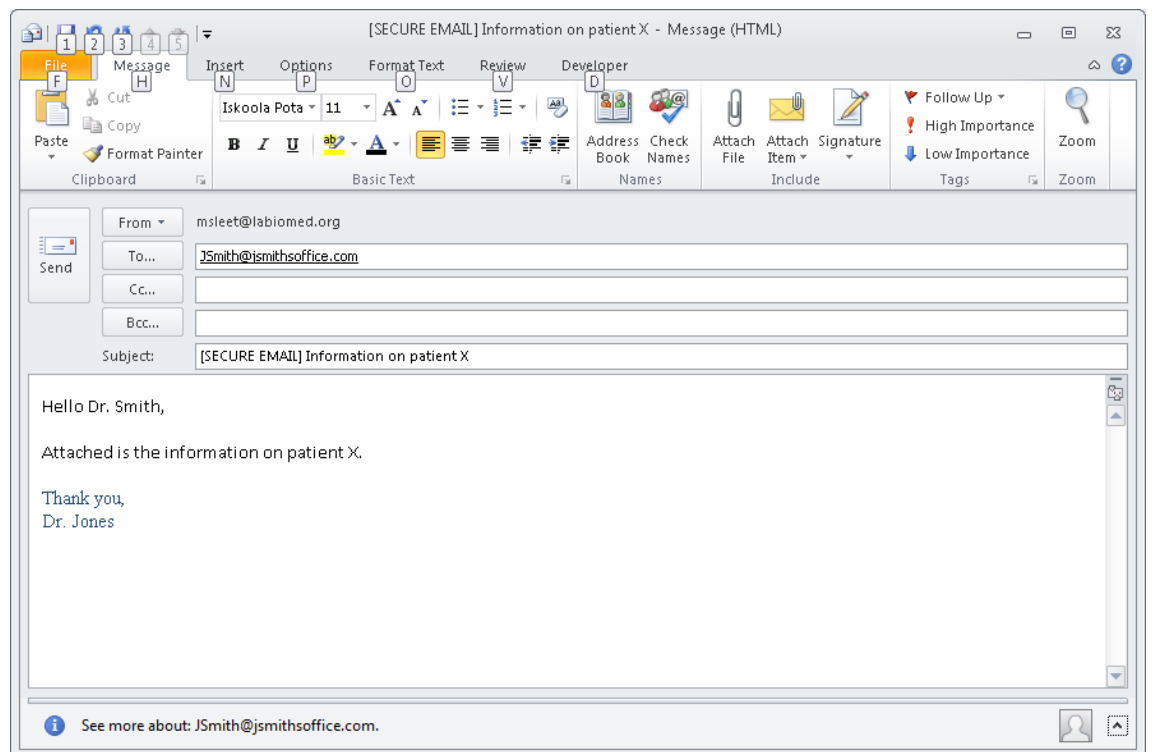

Figure 1

What will the recipient see when he/she receives the email?

The recipient of the email will receive an email with an attachment titled message.html. See Figure 2. They will be required to click and run the attachment which will then take them to the LA BioMed Encryption Service. See Figure 3. They will have the option of creating an account or using a one-time passcode to view the secure message.
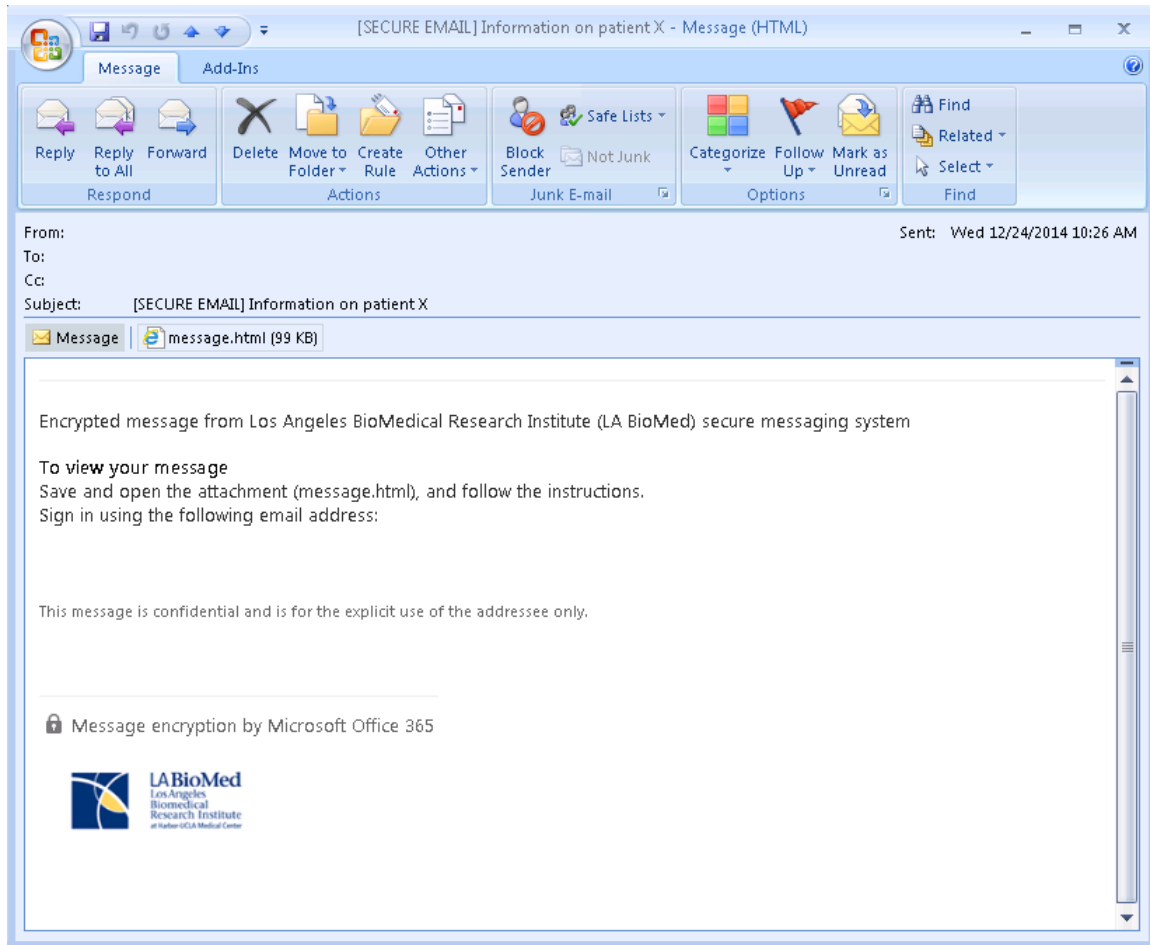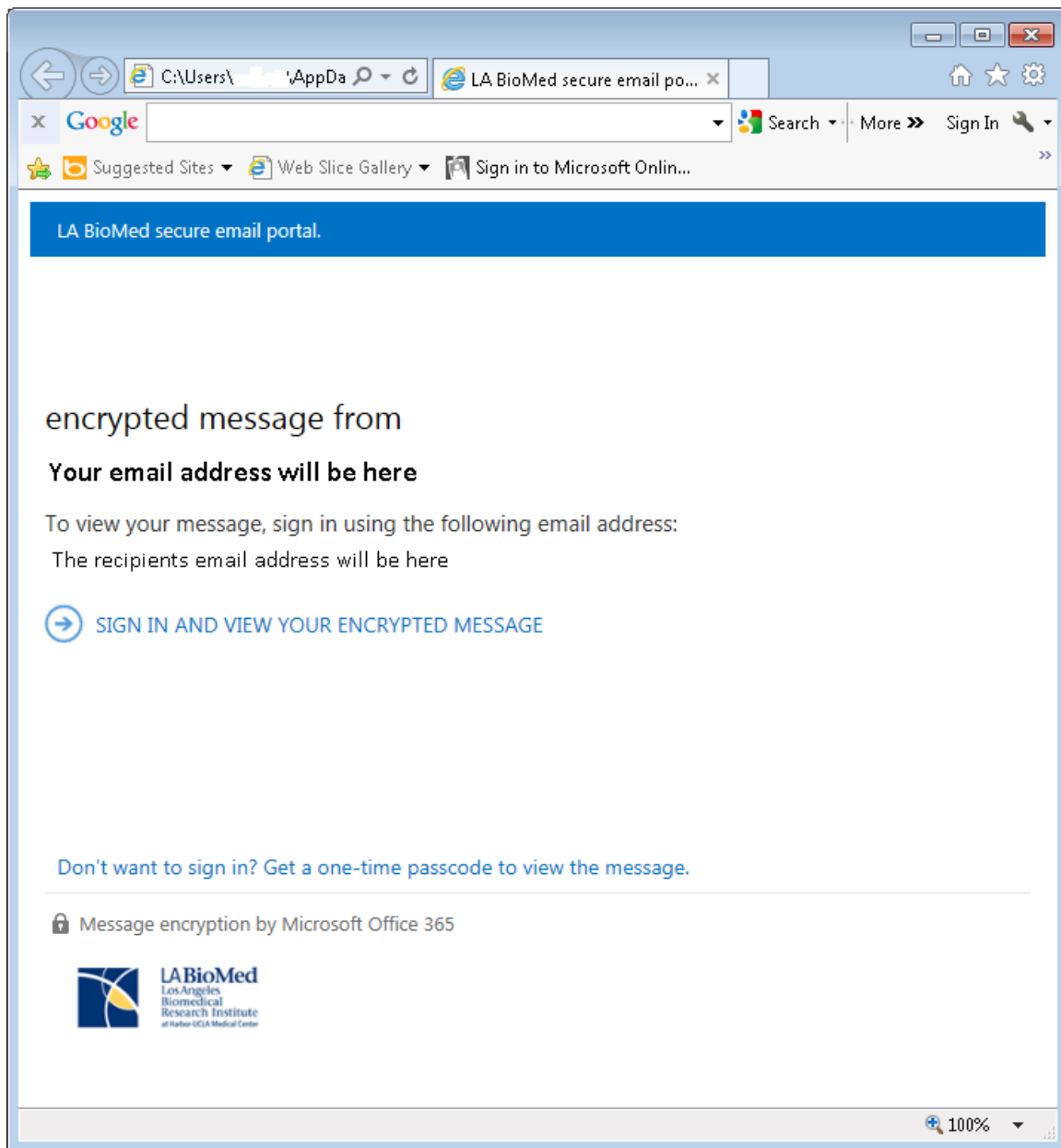

Figure 2

Figure 3

What will I see if the recipient responds to the encrypted email?

If the recipient responds to your encrypted email from within the LABioMed secure email portal the message will continue to be encrypted. However your recipient should always consider using their own precautions to protect sensitive data.