

IRISH HEALTH SERVICE HIT BY RANSOMWARE ATTACK

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Ransomware attacks typically involve the infection of computers with malicious software, often downloaded by clicking on seemingly innocuous links in emails or other website pop-ups. |

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Ireland's health service operator shut down all its IT systems on Friday to protect it from what it described as a significant ransomware attack but said its coronavirus vaccination programme was unaffected.

The head of the Health Service Executive (HSE) said it took the step as a precaution to protect as much information as possible and that it was assessing how the attack would affect other services.

One maternity hospital in Dublin cancelled all outpatient appointments on Friday other than those for women 36 weeks pregnant or in need of urgent care.

"It's a very sophisticated attack, not just the standard attack. It is impacting all of our national and local systems that would be involved in all of our core services," HSE Chief Executive Paul Reid told national broadcaster RTE.

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"The vaccination programme continues thankfully, it's a separate system."

Reid said the attack was largely affecting information stored on central servers and not hospital equipment.

Ransomware attacks typically involve the infection of computers with malicious software, often downloaded by clicking on seemingly innocuous links in emails or other website pop-ups. Users are left locked out of their systems, with the demand of a ransom to be paid to restore computer functions.

They differ from a data breach or other types of hacking, which may steal large batches of customer data or other information from companies or individuals.

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Facebook's Oversight Board on Wednesday upheld the social media network's decision on January 7 to block the then-US President Donald Trump from its

The technology could be as much as 45% faster than the mainstream 7-nanometre chips in many of today's laptops and phones and up to 75% more power efficient, the company said.

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