

NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2015 | Release #15-015

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Healthcare Sector Security Breaches Affected most Consumers in 2014

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is releasing its Security Breach Report, providing insight into the most common sectors breached and how many people are affected by those breaches.

From July 2008 through December 2014, SCDCA received 165 security breach notices affecting **7,047,712** South Carolina residents. In 2014, SCDCA received a total of 39 notices. While Government breaches account for the most consumer information exposed overall, the healthcare sector accounted for the most consumers affected in 2014, with three breaches reported, affecting 37,237 South Carolina consumers.

Though the information compromised could simply be name and credit card number, it is often much more revealing. In some cases laptops containing specific information on a consumer's procedure including date, insurance information, doctor, prescription information, etc. were reported stolen.

This alarming figure punctuates the need for consumers to be aware of medical identity theft. Medical identity theft involves someone stealing a consumer's information to obtain medical benefits in their name. This could result in the consumer not being eligible for necessary treatments or even being misdiagnosed due to inaccurate medical records created by the thief's medical treatment.

Staying vigilant can help a consumer avoid and detect medical identity theft. The following signs could mean you're a victim of medical identity theft:

- a bill for medical services you didn't receive
- a call from a debt collector about a medical debt you don't owe
- medical collection notices on your credit report that you don't recognize
- a notice from your health plan saying you reached your benefit limit
- a denial of insurance because your medical records show a condition you don't have.

For more information on protecting against Identity Theft visit our "Identity Theft Resources" webpage at www.consumer.sc.gov or contact SCDCA's Identity Theft Unit at 800-922-1594. To view the Security Breach Report in its entirety, click

http://www.consumer.sc.gov/Documents/PUBLICATIONS/Reports/SB_Reports/Security_Breach_Report_82015.pdf

About SCDCA

The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594.

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