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21 CareFirst Blue Cross Breach Hits 1.1M

Glossary
CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield (CF) is the Maryland affiliate of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, and is the largest health care provider in the state, with more than 1.1 million members. The company also has about 1.1 million members in the District of Columbia and about 400,000 members in northern Virginia, including federal employees.

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Healthcare giant CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield (CF) has begun notifying its customers that their personal information may have been exposed in a cyberattack that hit its computer systems on June 25. The company says it has no evidence that any of its customer data was actually stolen, but it is offering affected customers free identity theft protection services as a precaution.

CareFirst is the largest health care provider in the Mid-Atlantic region, with more than 1.1 million members in Maryland, the District of Columbia and northern Virginia, including many federal employees. The company says it has about 400,000 members in Virginia, and about 1.1 million members in the District of Columbia.

The company said it first detected the attack on June 25, and that it has since taken steps to block the attacker from accessing its computer systems. CareFirst said it has also hired a cybersecurity firm to assist in its investigation of the incident, and has reported the matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The company said the attacker was able to access CareFirst customer data including member name, date of birth, email addresses, and subscriber information such as member ID numbers and usernames. CareFirst said no credit card or medical information was exposed in the attack, and that password information was encrypted in its systems.

CareFirst said it is offering affected customers two years of free identity theft protection and credit monitoring services through AllClear ID. The company said it has also set up a toll-free phone number (877-263-7995) and a dedicated Web site (www.carefirstprotect.com) for affected customers to learn more about the incident and the services being offered.

CareFirst said it has also begun resetting the passwords of its customers as a precaution, and is recommending that its members change their passwords on its Web site. The company said it is also recommending that its members who use the same username and password for other online accounts should also change those passwords.

CareFirst said it has also begun a review of its security policies and procedures, and that it is working with its information technology vendors to "strengthen the security of our information technology systems." The company said it has also hired a "nationally recognized cybersecurity firm" to assist in the investigation of the incident, and has reported the matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Sources for this story include a spokesman for CareFirst and a cybersecurity expert who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the matter.

CareFirst's statement on the incident is available here. The company has posted a list of frequently asked questions about the incident here.

UPDATE, June 30, 2:00 p.m. ET: CareFirst has posted a statement on its Facebook page that it is offering its customers free identity theft protection services as a precaution.

UPDATE, June 30, 7:30 p.m. ET: Reader Jim Lynch has posted a copy of the letter that CareFirst is sending to its customers who may be affected by this breach.

UPDATE, July 1, 10:00 a.m. ET: CareFirst has posted a statement on its Facebook page that it has begun resetting the passwords of its customers.

UPDATE, July 1, 2:00 p.m. ET: Reader Jim Lynch has posted a copy of the letter that CareFirst is sending to its members who may be affected by this breach.

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60 comments

Anonymous
June 30, 2015 at 1:12 pm

At this message I is only email Anyone ID Get the my SSN, medical information and financial information. Is this a legitimate offer?

mike nelson
June 30, 2015 at 1:14 pm

Sounds like a lot of people will be affected. Hopefully not, but I suspect it is inevitable, and that's why I'm glad I don't have any health insurance.

**Anonymous