

The Danish Cancer Society has been fined

Date: 29-09-2021

Decision

Private companies

Police report

Reported breach of personal data security

Treatment safety

Social Security number

Sensitive information

Unauthorized access

The Danish Data Protection Authority has reported Kræftens Bekæmpelse to the police and proposed a fine of DKK 800,000 after repeated problems with insufficient protection of e.g. health information of citizens with cancer.

The Norwegian Data Protection Authority has today reported the Norwegian Cancer Society to the police and proposed a fine for not having met the requirements of the GDPR regarding appropriate security measures. At least 1,448 citizens' information - including sensitive personal health data - was compromised.

"When citizens with cancer entrust their health information to others, they need to be able to rest assured that it will be properly taken care of. In this case, we have not only seen isolated slips, but several serious breaches that could actually have been avoided through fairly basic measures ," says Allan Frank, IT security specialist and lawyer at the Norwegian Data Protection Authority, and continues:

"Although the warning lights have been flashing for some time, the Norwegian Cancer Society has not carried out the initiatives they themselves have assessed as necessary, and the consequence has been further new security breaches."

Failure to implement security measures

The case is based on four cases where the Danish Cancer Society has detected breaches of personal data security and reported them to the Danish Data Protection Authority. Two of them related to the theft of computers, while two concerned phishing attacks - and all four were due to the Norwegian Cancer Society failing to implement security measures that they themselves had assessed as appropriate.

That assessment was based on a similar breach of personal data security in August 2018, when the association was exposed to hacker attacks in the form of phishing and spoofing. In connection with this attack, Kræftens Bekæmpelse themselves assessed that they should increase protection through multi-factor authentication (i.e. that you use two or more factors to log on to systems etc.), but this was not implemented.

The consequence was that the Norwegian Cancer Society was unable to prevent or prevent the subsequent breaches of personal data security, and unauthorized persons gained unauthorized access to personal data that was stored in the employees' Outlook or locally on the employees' computers.

At least 1,448 people's information was compromised, and in several cases it included sensitive personal information in the form of health information, including medical history.

As a data controller, you must assess which measures are appropriate in relation to the processing you undertake. Once you have assessed what is appropriate security, it is essential that you ensure that these measures are implemented. If you do not do so, you yourself have assessed that your way of processing personal data is not sufficiently secure. It is particularly important that you are faithful to your risk assessment when processing information about many people and information about health conditions.

Donations are not included in the calculation of the amount of the fine

"Although we understand the efforts made to fight cancer, we must also be firm that if, as part of the work area, you normally process people's personal information for disease prevention, bereavement groups or the like, you also have to live up to the responsibility that comes with it. In the end, it's a matter of trust, which you also have to earn when you work in the service of a good cause," says Allan Frank.

However, the Data Protection Authority is aware that the Cancer Society is an organization where the majority of the association's income comes from donations and private funds. In the calculation and assessment of the size of the fine, the Danish Data Protection Authority has taken the Cancer Society's income from recycling, events and the sale of merchandise and other products as a starting point, which corresponds to approximately 10 percent of the association's total income.

Do you want to know more?

You can read more about the protection of personal data [here](#).

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