

215,000 Blue Cross members in Illinois affected by Anthem breach: officials

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois said Tuesday that about 215,000 current and former members were affected by a data breach at health insurance giant Anthem.

The Health Care Service Corp., which operates Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, said customers who visited a health care provider in a state where Anthem operates could have seen their personal information exposed. Anthem, the nation's largest operator of Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans, would have processed an Illinois policyholder's claim in those states.

Anthem manages Blue Cross plans in more than a dozen states. The company announced this month that its databases that house employee and customer data had been breached by hackers, affecting up to 80 million nationwide.

Anthem is working with the FBI to investigate the breach and has offered customers free credit monitoring.

Social Security numbers for some Illinois Blue Cross members may have been compromised, a spokeswoman said.

A preliminary analysis suggests personal information such as addresses, birth dates and telephone numbers were likely included in the breach. Blue Cross said medical and credit card information was not exposed.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield members who live out of state or are members of other Blue Cross plans are not included in the 215,000 total.

Other recent medical data breaches include an incident in October at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, when a laptop was stolen. In August the Advocate Medical Group announced a massive breach that affected 4 million patients who visited Advocate doctors from the early 1990s through July.

Members who were affected by the Anthem breach will receive formal notification by mail within a few weeks. All individuals affected are eligible to enroll immediately for two years of credit monitoring and identity repair services through AnthemFacts.com, or by calling 877-263-7995.

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