



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Health Systems Security Breach: Consumer Tips

Columbia, SC... The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is urging consumers to take steps to protect their identities, in the wake of yet another security breach. Community Health Systems, which operates eight hospitals in South Carolina, reported the theft of names, social security numbers, birthdays, telephone numbers and addresses for 4.5 million consumers nationwide.

Consumers who received care from the following hospitals or physicians tied to the network, or those who were referred to the hospitals, may be impacted: Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center, Hartsville; Carolinas Hospital System, Florence; Carolinas Hospital System - Marion, Mullins; Chester Regional Medical Center, Chester; Chesterfield General Hospital, Cheraw; Marlboro Park Hospital, Bennettsville; Mary Black Memorial Hospital, Spartanburg; Springs Memorial Hospital, Lancaster.

Those affected by this breach should defend against identity theft and scams by:

- **Placing an (FREE) initial fraud alert on your credit report.** To place an initial fraud alert on your credit report, **you only have to call one** of the Credit Reporting Agencies (CRA) at the numbers below and they will notify the other two.
- **Placing a (FREE) security freeze on your report.** You **must call each of the CRAs** to do this. It is FREE to place, thaw and lift the freeze for SC Residents. Once you place the freeze, you will receive a PIN number you can use to thaw or lift the freeze. Make sure to keep it in a safe place. Place the freeze or fraud alert with the numbers below. To place a freeze online, use the web addresses below:

Equifax: 800-685-1111 or <https://www.freeze.equifax.com>

Experian: 888-397-3742 or www.experian.com/freeze

-more-

TransUnion: 800-680-7289 or <http://freeze.transunion.com>

- **Remembering to track your finances.** Always review your banking statements as soon as you receive them. Also, review your credit report regularly. You are entitled to a free credit report from each one of the three major credit reporting agencies annually. You can obtain your report by visiting www.annualcreditreport.com or calling 877-322-8228. Check your statements and credit report for unauthorized purchases/accounts and incorrect information.
- **Watching out for scam attempts.** Scammers have more personal information than ever, making phishing, spear phishing, and other scams more believable. Just remember, if you are unsure about an e-mail, text or phone call, hang up or delete it. Never click on links or attachments included in these e-mails and texts. For more information on these types of scams, visit <http://www.consumer.sc.gov/consumer/PressRelease/Documents/2014/14020.pdf>

For more tips on identity theft and details on the steps to mitigate a security breach, consumers can access SCDCA's guide, *Identity Theft: What You Need to Know* at www.consumer.sc.gov under the "What's New" section or contact SCDCA's Identity Theft Unit toll-free at 800-922-1594.

(<http://www.consumer.sc.gov/Documents/PUBLICATIONS/IDTheftUnit/idtheftguide2013.pdf>)

Consumers without internet service can also call to request the Identity Theft guide through the mail.

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SCDCA 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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