

Questions & Answers

BCBSA Security Breach

Use the information in this Q&A to help answer questions you may receive from provider offices in response to the October mailing notifying providers that BCBSA experienced an unauthorized transfer of provider data.

Question	Answer
1. How did the loss of this provider data occur?	An employee transferred provider data from the Provider Data Repository (PDR) of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) and stored it on a personal, non-BCBSA laptop. The data was unencrypted and unauthorized by BCBSA and violated BCBSA's established data security policies. Subsequently, the employee's laptop containing the data was stolen.
2. What types of information were included in the data?	The data included networks of providers with the following information (no medical information was contained in the file): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Address • Tax Identification Number (TIN) • National Provider Identifier (NPI)
3. Was there any Protected Health Information (PHI) included in the data?	No.
4. Was there any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) included?	Yes, the potential exists for PII to be included in some cases where Provider Tax ID number may be the same as the provider's Social Security Number (SSN).
5. How many providers may be impacted?	Approximately 5,000
6. What type of information does PREMERA send to the BCBSA? Why?	Premera Blue Cross shares information identifying our in-network providers, including Tax ID number, with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) as a benefit to members in all states and jurisdictions represented by a BCBSA plan. We do not routinely share provider SSN. The provider SSN was accessed in cases where a provider has a Tax ID which is the same as their SSN.
7. How are we communicating this issue to our providers?	We sent a letter to impacted providers on October 8, 2009.
8. Why did providers get a letter from Regence with the same code?	To streamline identification, the BCBSA assigned only one code per provider Tax ID; therefore, providers may receive the same code from any Blue plans they are contracted with.
9. Which credit monitoring services will be provided to qualified/affected providers who request it?	The credit monitoring agency, Experian, is providing the following 12-month Triple Alert membership package to potentially impacted providers whose Tax ID numbers match their SSNs and who request the service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily monitoring and timely alerts of key changes to your credit reports so you will be notified of activities such as notification on new inquiries, newly opened accounts, delinquencies, public records or address changes. • Toll-free access to a dedicated team of Fraud Resolution Representatives who will help you resolve problems associated with credit fraud or identity theft; contact credit grantors to dispute charges, close accounts if need be, compile documents; and contact all relevant government agencies. <p>\$25,000 in identity theft insurance coverage (\$10,000 for New York state residents) with zero deductible provided by Virginia Surety Company, Inc. for eligible identity theft expenses (coverage is not available in US overseas Commonwealth or Territories).</p>

Question	Answer
<p>10. How can impacted providers access the credit monitoring services?</p>	<p>Upon receipt, providers can immediately activate their assigned code, which is included in the notification, when they enroll in the credit monitoring service with the credit agency, Experian. There are two enrollment options for providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Experian's web site: http://partner.consumerinfo.com/bcbs • Through Experian's phone number (866.252.0121). <p>The codes must be activated by affected providers no later than December 31, 2009. If activated, the monitoring services will be available to providers, at BCBSA's expense, for one year from the date of activation.</p>
<p>11. Who do affected providers contact if they have questions about Experian's credit monitoring services?</p>	<p>Questions about Experian's Triple Alert membership services should be directed to Experian's Customer Care representatives at 866.252.0121.</p>
<p>12. What if the provider finds unauthorized use of their PII?</p>	<p>They should immediately contact the credit agency, Experian, to report the unauthorized use of their PII. Experian has dedicated fraud specialists who will walk the provider through the steps necessary to resolve any credit fraud or identity theft problems. Experian's Customer Care number is 866.252.0121.</p>
<p>13. How will BCBSA prevent this from happening again?</p>	<p>BCBSA employees receive annual and departmental training on privacy and security procedures, which includes using encryption software when saving PHI and PII to mobile devices, and only saving such information to BCBSA-issued devices. In addition, BCBSA is further strengthening internal controls and training protocols.</p>