

Anthem Data Breach Sparks Class Action Lawsuit, Weitz & Luxenberg Announces

LOS ANGELES, Calif., Feb. 18, 2015 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Weitz & Luxenberg, P.C., today announced the filing of a class action lawsuit against the nation's second-largest health insurer, Indianapolis-based Anthem Inc., following disclosure earlier this month that the private information of 80 million Anthem customers was stolen in a massive online data breach.

Over a six-week span beginning in mid-December, hackers siphoned from Anthem's computers a wealth of customer personal information, including names, birthdates, Social Security numbers, employment records and income data, the law firm said.

Security experts believe devastating financial losses may loom for Anthem customers as identity thieves use the ill-gotten information to ransack checking and savings accounts, abscond with tax refunds, and apply for credit cards, mortgages and bank loans in their victims' names, Weitz & Luxenberg said.

"Already, victims of the data breach are being targeted with email phishing scams from criminals sending fake but real-looking official Anthem correspondences," said Robin L. Greenwald, who heads Weitz & Luxenberg's Environmental, Toxic Tort & Consumer Protection Unit.

Details of the Anthem Data Breach Lawsuit:

Weitz & Luxenberg's class action alleges Anthem was negligent and in violation of California consumer protection laws.

"We intend to hold Anthem responsible for neglecting to do what was reasonable and prudent to safeguard its customers' personal information," said Greenwald.

The complaint asks the court for an order forcing Anthem to take all necessary steps to prevent future data breaches and for an unspecified amount of monetary compensation to make up for the financial losses members of the class suffer as a result of the data breach.

The class action was filed in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. The lawsuit names a Santa Clarita, California, mother of two as its representative plaintiff. She has been an Anthem customer for 10 years.

According to the filing, data thieves pilfered personal information on all 37 million of Anthem's current policy holders as well as the private data on some 43 million former customers – a total of 80 million consumers.

"This theft is the result of Anthem's failure to implement cyber security measures commensurate with the duties it undertook by storing vast quantities of sensitive customer data," said Greenwald.

“Every business that collects and stores sensitive information about its customers has a duty to safeguard that information and ensure it is secure and remains private,” Greenwald added.

“The data collected and stored by health insurance companies are among the most highly sensitive personally identifiable information,” she continued. “Health insurance companies, in turn, bear the crucial responsibility to protect this data from compromise and theft.”

Anthem Data Breach Exposed Social Security Numbers:

The theft of Social Security numbers is profoundly worrisome because they may be used by identity thieves to engage in a wide range of financial transactions in the name of unsuspecting others, Greenwald explained.

Worse, unlike the process of canceling and replacing a stolen credit card, blocking the use of a stolen Social Security number by an identity thief is no simple matter, she said.

On the list of crimes that may be committed with a stolen Social Security number is tax fraud.

This possibility prompted the head of one state’s tax-collection agency to recommend that Anthem customers not postpone filing their taxes for 2014, lest fraudsters beat them to it and snatch away their refunds, said Greenwald.

Anthem insurance plans are sold under various banners. They are Anthem Blue Cross, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia, Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Amerigroup, Caremore, Unicare, Healthlink and DeCare.

Individuals who now are or once were holders of one of these brands’ policies are urged to contact Weitz & Luxenberg for information about how to participate in the class action lawsuit against Anthem.

About Weitz & Luxenberg:

Weitz & Luxenberg, P.C., is among the nation’s leading and most readily recognized personal injury law firms. Weitz & Luxenberg’s numerous litigation areas include: mesothelioma, defective medicine and devices, environmental pollutants, consumer protection, accidents, personal injury and medical malpractice. Victims of accidents are invited to rely on Weitz & Luxenberg’s more than 25 years of experience handling such cases. You can contact the firm’s Client Relations department at 800-476-6070 or at clientrelations@weitzlux.com.

More information: <http://www.weitzluxenberg.com/>.

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