

Utah Department of Health tries to calm the stolen Social Security number storm

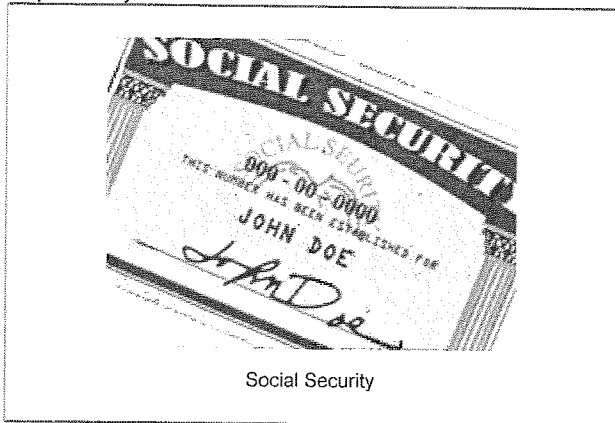
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Reported by: Don Hudson



Social Security

SALT LAKE CITY (ABC 4 News) Is the state of Utah doing enough to help hundreds of thousands of people who had their social security numbers and other personal information compromised?

The Utah Department of Health tried to calm down the social security storm Wednesday evening at a forum. And while some people feel a little better about the situation that exposed the personal information of an estimated 800,000 Medicaid and CHIP clients, most are still very concerned.

Lee Decker attended the meeting with his wife, Jo Ann, after she received a letter telling her about the security breach last month. "It doesn't seem like anybody can really get to the bottom of this." The 81-year-old is worried about who has his wife's information and what they might do with it. "It is a big, big concern."

Jo Ann says the hacking incident has really opened her eyes. "The hackers can just ruin your total life." And the 77-year-old thinks she will be dealing with the issue for years. "This could go on for a long time. You know. Maybe until we die."

According to the Utah Health Policy Project an estimated 280,000 people had their Social Security numbers stolen from a computer and as many as 500,000 others had other sensitive information, like names, birth dates and addresses stolen.

Those who attended the forum learned that the state is paying for a year of credit monitoring. But Jason Cooke of the Utah Health Policy Project - a non-profit watch dog group - says that isn't enough. "The reality is - these people are going to face uncertainty of the use of their personal information for years to come." And they say the state needs to act right now. "The governor and the leadership of the state need to step up and say, yes this is a problem and we understand there is a human element to this."

UHPP representatives are also worried about what this security breach will do to those who want or need to turn to CHIP or Medicaid in the future. Cooke says, while they want to help those impacted now they also "want to secure the data going forward."

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