

Snohomish County
Media Contact
Kent Patton

Snohomish County, Washington Provides Notice of Data Security Incident

May 20, 2019 – Snohomish County, Washington (“Snohomish County”) is providing notice of an incident involving the unauthorized disclosure of data related to its employee health plan members. Although Snohomish County is unaware of any misuse of the impacted information, it will be mailing letters to impacted individuals beginning on May 20, 2019.

On April 4, 2019, Snohomish County became aware that a document containing certain health-plan related information of some of its employees had been inadvertently disclosed on April 3, 2019 in response to an open records request from an unrelated company. Snohomish County immediately took steps to mitigate the disclosure by limiting access to the data and contacting the recipient company to request deletion of the information. The recipient company confirmed that the information had been accessed by one employee and deleted from its systems.

The inadvertently disclosed document contained health plan member names, employment details, insurance plan (health, life, Aflac selection), and employee premium contributions.

Information privacy and security are among Snohomish County’s highest priorities. Upon learning of the incident, Snohomish County quickly limited accesses to the document, contacted the inadvertent recipient company to request deletion of the document, and launched an internal investigation into the cause of this incident. They are currently exploring additional training and education for employees to prevent similar future incidents and will be notifying the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Affected individuals have been provided with information regarding steps they can take to place a credit freeze or fraud alert on their credit file. Snohomish County also suggest that individuals regularly review their Explanation of Benefits statements and financial account statements for any suspicious activity. Individuals who discover unusual activity should promptly report the issue to their insurance company, healthcare provider, or financial institution.

A dedicated assistance line has been established so individuals can obtain more information or ask additional questions. It can be reached at 1-855-424-1293 (toll free) Monday through Friday between 6:00 am and 6:00 pm PT.