

Medical identity theft incidents increasing

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(HealthDay)—Medical identity theft is on the rise, costly to consumers, and challenging to resolve, according to the fifth annual report published by the Ponemon Institute.

The researchers examined how pervasive identity theft is in the United States, its effect, and measures that can be taken to prevent its proliferation. The research was funded by the Medical Identity Fraud Alliance; data were obtained from 1,005 survey responses for 2014.

According to the report, there was a 21.7 percent increase in medical identity thefts since the previous report. Medical identity theft is costly to consumers, with 65 percent of victims having to pay an average of \$13,500 to resolve the crime. The victim of theft is rarely informed by the health care provider or insurer; however, due to privacy issues, victims must be involved in the resolution of the crime. Only 10 percent of respondents reported satisfactory outcomes. Victims of medical identity theft report a negative impact on their reputation, often due to

disclosure of sensitive personal health conditions. Consumers expect [health care providers](#) to be proactive in preventing and detecting medical identity fraud.

"Consumers should be informed about what they can do to prevent medical [identity theft](#), including protecting their credentials from family and friends, monitoring their [health care](#) records, and paying attention to insurance claims for possible signs their identity has been compromised," the Ponemon Institute states in the [report](#).

More information: [More Information](#)

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