

Crisis Management
Case Study
Data Breach
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It's nearly 3:30 in the afternoon on Tuesday – the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. You are sitting at your desk putting the finishing touches on some policy revisions and are looking forward to a nice long weekend that includes family, shopping, and relaxing. Your employer, Azusa Health System, is having a banner year. Emergency room visits are up, inpatient volumes are up more than 10%, length of stay is down by nearly as much, and there are significant expectations for the year based on 10 months of data. Despite all the work on your desk, you are feeling some remorse that you didn't take Wednesday off, particularly since the corporate office seems only half full.

The phone rings. You glance at the phone, and while you don't recognize the number, you answer it.

“Is this Mary Smith, the chief compliance officer for Asuza Health System?” a male voice asks. “It is,” you respond, “to whom am I speaking and how can I help you?”

“My name is Brian Krebs. You may not know me, but I write and blog extensively about cyber-security challenges and threats. Unfortunately, I have solid information that Asuza's patient databases have been compromised, and sensitive, confidential information related to 2 million of your patients has been stolen. I intend to post a blog about what I know of the breach tomorrow afternoon at 4:00pm EST, but wanted to give you a heads up. By the way, based on early intel, it appears that several of your board members and a host of politicians may have had their data compromised by the breach.”

“I appreciate the call”, you reply. “Can you give me some more information on when this happened or what you intend to say?” “Sorry”, he says, “you will need to read it tomorrow.”

Which of the following describes your next step:

- You resign, effective immediately
- You start scrambling to figure out who is available and who can lead the response
- You trigger the Crisis Response Plan for your organization by calling an emergency meeting of the Crisis Response Team for 4:00 pm
- You pretend the call never happened and act surprised the next night when you get a call from the CEO about the story on the national news