

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Hearing on Healthcare.gov: Consequences of Stolen Identity**

Chairman Smith: When the Obama Administration launched Healthcare.gov, Americans were led to believe that the website was safe and secure. As the Science, Space, and Technology Committee learned at our hearing in November, this was not the case.

We heard troubling testimony from online security experts who highlighted the many vulnerabilities of the Obamacare website. These flaws pose significant risks to Americans' privacy and the security of their personal information.

One witness, Mr. David Kennedy, who has been re-invited for today's hearing, testified that there are "clear indicators that even basic security was not built into the Healthcare.gov website."

In addition, all four experts testified that the website is not secure and should not have been launched. Mr. Kennedy will update the Committee on the security of the website since November 30, 2013, which was the Administration's self-imposed deadline for when it would be fixed.

Since the November hearing, other events have emerged that prompted the need for today's hearing. In December, a former senior security expert at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services stated that she recommended against launching the Healthcare.gov website on October 1st because of "high risk security concerns."

A letter addressed to the Committee from Mr. Kennedy and independently signed by seven other security researchers who reviewed his analysis of vulnerabilities presents some very troubling information.

To paraphrase one of the experts, Mr. Kevin Mitnick, who was once the world's most wanted hacker, breaking into Healthcare.gov and potentially gaining access to the information stored in these databases would be a hacker's dream. According to Mr. Mitnick, "A breach may result in massive identity theft never seen before."

Further, a recent report by the credit bureau and consumer data tracking service Experian forecasts an increase in data breaches in 2014, particularly in the healthcare industry. Specifically, the report states: "The healthcare industry, by far, will be the most susceptible to publicly disclosed and widely scrutinized data breaches in 2014. Add to that the Healthcare Insurance Exchanges, which are slated to add seven million people into the healthcare system, and it becomes clear that the industry, from local physicians to large hospital networks, provide an expanded attack surface for breaches."

Experian provides the identity verification component of the Health Insurance Marketplace enrollment process.

Despite increased accessibility to Healthcare.gov, concerns continue to grow about the security of personal information.

The work of this Committee will help Congress make decisions about what actions may be necessary to further inform and safeguard the American people.

We are here today to discuss whether the Americans who have signed up for health plans have put their personal information at risk. If Americans' information is not secure, then the theft of their identities is inevitable and dangerous.

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