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The Biggest Privacy Breach Happens Everyday

Anthem, the nation’s second largest health plan will pay $16 million to settle privacy violations from “the biggest known health care hack in U.S. history.” The data of 79 million people was exposed, including names, Social Security numbers and medical ID numbers. This settlement is nearly three times larger than any other amount paid in a privacy case.

But here’s the painful reality. The biggest “hack” of all is happening every day under HIPAA, the so-called federal medical privacy rule. According to the rule, the myriad details of people’s medical records can be, and are, shared liberally and lawfully without patient consent. That’s the biggest breach of all but you won’t hear it in the news.

“Insurer Anthem Will Pay Record $16M for Massive Data Breach,” Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Associated Press, October 15, 2018: