

VIN News Service questions emailed to Vets First Choice, 1/15/19

I am not looking for VFC to address questions about the AVImark agreement. Specifically, I want to know more about the unauthorized emails I asked about.

Regarding the unauthorized emails, here's a rough outline of what I have learned:

In two cases, practice owners were in the process of creating a store and signing on with VFC, when an email blast went out to their client list without their knowledge. In one of those cases, the practice owner was not even aware VFC had access to their client names and email contacts. In the third case, it had been two years since the veterinarian had been in talks with VFC about creating an online store when a Black Friday email offer went out with his practice logo and name on it. He said he has no idea how VFC got his client names. When he contacted VFC, he was told he was part of a push out to "underproducing" hospitals.

In a fourth case, the veterinarian was a new owner. She had never been in talks with VFC to open a store. After her clients received two email blasts, she was told VFC got her client list because the previous owner had once signed up for VetCentric, which VFC purchased in 2012. As a result, they told her she had an "open account with Vets First Choice." The previous owner said he stopped using VetCentric and switched to another email reminder service. The unauthorized VFC email went to names that had been added to the hospital record in the previous four months, so that would suggest that VFC was extracting data from her PIMS several years after the hospital's relationship with VetCentric ended.

Here are some, though probably not all, of my questions:

Is the company aware that at least 5 (and possibly 7 that I know of so likely more) veterinarians say VFC emailed sales offers to their clients without their authorization or knowledge last fall? When did it first happen? Do you know how many veterinarians total have had this happen in the past year?

What steps has the company taken to ensure this will not happen again?

How does VFC pull client names and contact information from practice PIMS to send out reminders and coupons, etc.? Is it via software installed on the practice hard drive?

If a hospital closes its VFC store, what happens to any software that might be used to retrieve data from a practice information management system? Is it disabled? What happens to the data that was collected by VFC while a clinic has a VFC store? And what happens to the data after it has closed its account? And in the cases where veterinarians say they never even agreed to sign up with VFC, what happened to the client information used to send the emails?

Is it true that no hospitals were compensated for costs when they agreed to honor the sales deals in an effort at damage control?

VFC and Schein have stated their intention to roll-out the Vets First Choice platform to the entire Schein customer base, under the new brand Covetrus: This makes some nervous. What do you

say to veterinarians affected by or hearing about these unauthorized emails who wonder if VFC has the systems and the will to protect valuable practice data?