

Verizon Sneaks Customer Off Unlimited Data Plan, Despite Promises It Wouldn't

Sally Medina is a Sacramento mom grandfathered with her daughter on an unlimited data plan, or so she thought.

When daughter Leticia started getting text messages from Verizon alerting her she used half of her data allowance for the month, the Medina family learned for the first time Verizon had quietly switched them away from their unlimited data plan to one with just a 2GB usage allowance.

The family suspects the change was made when Leticia upgraded to a new phone back in January, and did not realize it until slowly growing data use finally triggered the first usage alert from Verizon.

Medina is angry because Verizon pulled the rug out from their agreement to allow the family to keep unlimited data.

"This was the agreement. We did our part. I think they should follow through on theirs," Medina told CBS Sacramento consumer reporter Kurtis Ming. "They told her it was going to be unlimited so she didn't question it."

Too late to fix it now, came the reply from Verizon Wireless, who refused to switch the family back to unlimited data.

"Selling data consumption is incredibly lucrative, especially since data consumption is expected to rise. People are getting more hungry for it. And also people will start using more data as the network speeds improve," CNET senior editor Jessica Dolcourt told the consumer reporter.

Dolcourt added carriers have a vested interest kicking customers off unlimited data as quickly as possible so they can start earning the additional revenue that comes with more expensive tiered data plans.

Verizon today launched its biggest change yet with its new "Share Everything" plan. Consumer groups like Free Press agree it does represent a big change. Verizon used to charge \$29.99 a month for unlimited data. As of today, it charges \$50 for 1GB on its newest plan.

The company says existing customers grandfathered on unlimited data plans can

keep them, but only if they do not upgrade their phones or are willing to pay the unsubsidized upgrade price, which can run as high as \$600. Either way, Verizon Wireless will get paid.

In light of the media attention on the company, the Medina family ultimately won what they wanted — an apology from Verizon and a return to unlimited data for daughter Leticia. But even she will not escape choosing a different plan if she wants a discounted phone in the future.