



THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

This Notice of Privacy Practices (the "**Notice**") tells you about the ways we may use and disclose your protected health information ("**medical information**") and your rights and our obligations regarding the use and disclosure of your medical information. This Notice applies to Eye Physicians of Austin, PA, its providers and employees (the "**Practice**").

I. OUR OBLIGATIONS.

The Practice will:

- Maintain the privacy of your medical information, to the extent required by state and federal law;
- Give you this Notice explaining our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you;
- Notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured medical information under federal law; and
- Follow the terms of the version of this Notice that is currently in effect.

II. HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU.

The following categories describe the different reasons that we typically use and disclose medical information. These categories are intended to be general descriptions only, and not a list of every instance in which we may use or disclose your medical information. Please understand that for these categories, the law generally does not require us to get your authorization in order for us to use or disclose your medical information.

A. Treatment. We may use and disclose medical information about you to provide you with health care treatment and related services, including coordinating and managing your health care. We may disclose medical information about you to physicians, nurses, other health care providers, and personnel who are providing or involved in providing health care to you (both within and outside of the Practice). For example, should your care require referral to or treatment by another physician of a specialty outside of the Practice, we may provide that physician with your medical information in order to aid the physician in his or her treatment of you.

B. Payment. We may use and disclose medical information about you so that we or may bill and collect from you, an insurance company, or a third party for the health care services we provide. This may also include the disclosure of medical information to obtain prior authorization for treatment and procedures from your insurance plan. For example, we may send a claim for payment to your insurance company, and that claim may have a code on it that describes the services that have been rendered to you.

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C. Health Care Operations. We may use and disclose medical information about you for our health care operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to operate and manage the Practice and to promote quality care. For example, we may need to use or disclose your medical information in order to assess the quality of care you receive or to conduct certain cost management, business management, administrative, or quality improvement activities or to provide information to our insurance carriers.

D. Treatment Alternatives. We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that we believe may be of interest to you.

E. Appointment Reminders and Health-Related Benefits and Services. We may use and disclose medical information, in order to contact you to provide appointment reminders and other information. We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about health-related benefits or services that we believe may be of interest to you.

F. Business Associates. There are some services (such as billing or legal services) that may be provided to or on behalf of our Practice through contracts with business associates. We may disclose your medical information to our business associates so they can perform the job we have asked them to do. To protect your medical information, however, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

G. Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care. We may disclose medical information about you to your friend or family member who is involved in your health care, as well as to someone who helps pay for your care, but we will do so only as allowed by state or federal law or in accordance with your prior authorization.

H. As Required by Law. We may disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state, or local law or regulations.

I. Special Purposes. We may disclose medical information about you for special purposes when permitted or required by law, including the following:

1. *To Avert an Imminent Threat of Injury to Health or Safety*. We may use and disclose medical information about you when necessary to prevent or decrease a serious and imminent threat of injury to your physical, mental or emotional health or safety or the physical safety of another person.
2. *Organ and Tissue Donation*. We may use and disclose medical information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.
3. *Research*. We may use or disclose your medical information for research purposes in certain situations and as permitted by law.
4. *Military and Veterans*. If you are a member of the armed forces, we may use and disclose medical information about you as required by the appropriate military authorities.
5. *Workers' Compensation*. We may disclose medical information about you for your workers' compensation or similar program.



6. *Public Health Activities.* We may disclose medical information about you to public health authorities for public health activities. As a general rule, we are required by law to disclose certain types of information to public health authorities, such as the Texas Department of State Health Services.

7. *Health Oversight Activities.* We may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include audits, civil, administrative, or criminal investigations and proceedings, inspections, licensure and disciplinary actions, and other activities necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, specific government benefit programs, certain entities subject to government regulations which relate to health information, and compliance with civil rights laws.

8. *Legal Matters.* We may disclose medical information in response to a court or administrative order, subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful processes. In addition to lawsuits, there may be other legal proceedings for which we may be required or authorized to use or disclose your medical information, such as investigations of health care providers, competency hearings on individuals, or claims over the payment of fees for medical services.

9. *Law Enforcement, National Security, and Intelligence Activities.* In certain circumstances, we may disclose your medical information if we are asked to do so by law enforcement officials, or if we are required by law to do so. We may disclose your medical information to law enforcement personnel to prevent or decrease a serious and imminent threat of injury to your physical, mental or emotional health or safety or the physical safety of another person. We may disclose medical information about you to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

10. *Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Home Directors.* We may disclose your medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about our patients to funeral home directors as necessary to carry out their duties.

11. *Inmates.* If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under custody of a law enforcement official, we may disclose medical information about you to the health care personnel of a correctional institution as necessary for the institution to provide you with health care treatment.

J. Marketing of Related Health Services. We may use or disclose your medical information to send you treatment or health care operations communications concerning treatment alternatives or other health-related products or services. We may provide such communications to you in instances where we receive financial remuneration from a third party in exchange for making the communication only with your specific authorization unless the communication: (i) is made face-to-face by the Practice to you; (ii) consists of a promotional gift of nominal value provided by the Practice; or (iii) is otherwise permitted by law.

K. Fundraising. We may use or disclose specific limited amounts of your medical information to send you fundraising materials. You have a right to opt out of receiving such fundraising communications.



Any such fundraising materials sent to you will have clear and conspicuous instructions on how you may opt out of receiving such communications in the future.

L. Electronic Disclosures of Medical Information. Under Texas law, we are required to provide notice to you if your medical information is subject to electronic disclosure. This Notice serves as general notice that we may disclose your medical information electronically for treatment, payment, or health care operations or as otherwise authorized or required by state or federal law.

We may use electronic systems and technology-assisted services to support patient care, clinical documentation, and healthcare operations. These technologies may include electronic medical record systems, secure cloud-based service providers, patient communication platforms, and documentation assistance tools.

We may also use technology-assisted documentation tools, including artificial intelligence ("AI")-assisted systems, to help record and transcribe clinical conversations, organize medical information, summarize encounter details, and prepare draft clinical documentation for review by your healthcare provider. Any documentation generated through these tools is reviewed and approved by the responsible healthcare provider before it becomes part of your medical record. These tools do not independently diagnose medical conditions, determine treatment plans, or make healthcare decisions.

Information processed through these technologies may be handled by the Practice or by authorized business associates acting on our behalf. We require such business associates to appropriately safeguard your medical information in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

III. OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

A. Authorizations. There are times we may need or want to use or disclose your medical information for reasons other than those listed above, but to do so, we will need your prior authorization. Other than expressly provided herein, any other uses or disclosures of your medical information will require your specific written authorization.

B. Psychotherapy Notes, Marketing, and Sale of Medical Information. Use and disclosure of your "psychotherapy notes," use and disclosure of your medical information for marketing purposes, and disclosures of medical information that constitute a "sale of medical information" under HIPAA require your authorization.

C. Right to Revoke Authorization. If you provide us with written authorization to use or disclose your medical information, you may revoke that authorization in writing at any time. If you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your medical information for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any uses or disclosures we have already made in reliance upon your authorization and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.



IV. YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU.

Federal and state laws provide you with certain rights regarding the medical information we have about you. The following is a summary of those rights.

- A. Right to Inspect and Copy. Under most circumstances, you have the right to inspect and/or copy your medical information that we have in our possession, which generally includes your medical and billing records, but does not include psychotherapy notes. To inspect or copy your medical information, you must submit your request to do so in writing to the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address listed in Section VI below. If you request a copy of your information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or certain supplies associated with your request. The fee we may charge will be the amount allowed by applicable law. In certain circumstances, we may deny your request to review or copy your medical information. We will give you any such denial in writing. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. Another licensed health care professional chosen by the Practice will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will abide by the outcome of the review.
- B. Right to Amend. If you feel the medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by the Practice. To request an amendment, your request must be in writing and submitted to the HIPAA Officer at the address listed in Section VI below. In your request, you must provide a reason as to why you want this amendment. If we accept your request, we will notify you in writing. We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that: (i) was not created by us (unless you provide a reasonable basis for asserting that the person or organization that created the information is no longer available to act on the requested amendment); (ii) is not part of the information kept by the Practice; (iii) is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (iv) is accurate and complete. If we deny your request, we will notify you in writing.
- C. Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures" of your medical information. This is a list of the disclosures we have made for up to six years prior to the date of your request of your medical information, but does not include disclosures for Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations (as described in Sections II-A, B, and C of this Notice), disclosures made pursuant to your specific authorization (as described in Section III of this Notice) or certain other disclosures. To request a list of accounting, you must submit your request in writing to the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address outlined in Section VI below. Your request must state a time period, which may not be longer than six years. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper or electronically). The first list you request within twelve months will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you a reasonable fee for the costs of



providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved, and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred.

D. Right to Request Restrictions. You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. Except as specifically described below in this Notice, we are not required to agree to your request for a restriction or limitation. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide emergency treatment. In addition, there are certain situations where we won't be able to agree to your request, such as when we are required by law to use or disclose your medical information. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address listed in Section VI of this Notice below. In your request, you must explicitly tell us what information you want to limit, whether you want us to restrict our use, disclosure, or both, and to whom you want the limits to apply.

As stated above, in most instances, we do not have to agree to your request for restrictions on disclosures that are otherwise allowed. However, if you pay or another person (other than a health plan) pays on your behalf for an item or service in full, out of pocket, and you request that we not disclose the medical information relating solely to that item or service to a health plan for the purposes of payment or health care operations, then we will be abide by that request for restriction unless the disclosure is otherwise required by law.

E. Right to Request Confidential Communications. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a particular location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at home, not at work or, conversely, only at work and not at home. To request such confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address listed in Section VI below. We will not ask the reason for your request, and we will use our best efforts to accommodate all reasonable requests, but there are some requests with which we will not be able to comply. Your request must specify how and where you wish to be contacted.

F. Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice. You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this Notice at any time. To obtain a copy of this Notice, you must make your request in writing to the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address outlined in Section VI below.

G. Right to Breach Notification. In certain instances, we may be obligated to notify you (and potentially other parties) if we become aware that your medical information has been improperly disclosed or otherwise subject to a "breach" as defined in and/or required by HIPAA and applicable state law.

V. CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE.

We reserve the right to change this Notice at any time, along with our privacy policies and practices. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed Notice effective for medical information we already have



about you as well, as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice, along with an announcement that changes have been made, as applicable, in our office. When changes have been made to the Notice, you may obtain a revised copy by sending a letter to the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address listed in Section VI below or by asking the office receptionist for a current copy of the Notice.

VI. COMPLAINTS.

If you have any questions about this Notice, please contact the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the following address or phone number:

Dana Barnes, HIPAA Privacy Officer

5011 Burnet Rd., Austin, TX 78756

(512)583-4643 Fax (512)744-2020

If you believe that your privacy rights as described in this Notice have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Practice by contacting the Practice's HIPAA Officer at the address or phone number above. ***The Practice will not retaliate against any individual who files a complaint.*** You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/.