

Notice of Privacy Practices

CONNECTICUT EYE CENTER, P.C.

OFFICE MANAGER: 860-521-9230

EFFECTIVE DATE: APRIL 14, 2003

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.

We understand the importance of privacy, and are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your medical information. We make a record of the medical care we provide, and may receive such records from others. We use these records to provide or enable other health care providers to provide quality medical care, to obtain payment for services provided to you as allowed by your health plan and to enable us to meet our professional and legal obligations to operate this medical practice properly. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information and to provide individuals with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information. This notice describes how we may use and disclose your medical information. It also describes your rights and our legal obligations with respect to your medical information. If you have any questions about this Notice, please contact our Privacy Officer listed above.

A. How this Medical Practice May Use or Disclose Your Health Information

The law permits us to use or disclose your health information for the following purposes:

1. Treatment. We may use medical information about you to provide your medical care. We disclose medical information to our employees and others who are involved in providing the care you need. For example, we may share your medical information with other physicians or other health care providers who will provide services, which we do not provide. We may also share this information with a pharmacist who needs it to dispense a prescription to you, or a laboratory that performs a test.
2. Payment. We may use and disclose medical information about you to obtain payment for the services we provide. For example, we may give your health plan the information it requires before it will pay us. We may also disclose information to other health care providers to assist them in obtaining payment for services they have provided to you.
3. Health Care Operations. We may use and disclose medical information about you to operate this medical practice. For example, we may use and disclose this information to review and improve the quality of care we provide, or the competence and qualifications of our professional staff. We may also use and disclose this information to request that your health plan authorize services or referrals. We may also use and disclose this information as necessary for medical reviews, legal services and audits, including fraud and abuse detection and compliance programs and business planning and management.
4. Business Associates. We may share your medical information with our "business associates", such as our billing service that performs administrative services for us. We have a written contract with each of these business associates that contains terms requiring them to protect the confidentiality of your medical information.
5. Appointment Reminders. We may use and disclose medical information to contact and remind you about appointments. If you are not home, we may leave this information with the person answering the phone or on your answering machine.

6. Notification and Communication With Family. We may disclose your health information to a family member or a close friend or other person you identify where relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment for your care.
7. Required by Law. As required by law, we will use and disclose your health information, but we will limit our use or disclosure to the relevant requirements of the law. When the law requires us to report abuse, neglect or domestic violence, or respond to judicial or administrative proceedings, or to law enforcement officials, we will further comply with the requirement set forth below concerning those activities.
8. Public Health. We may, and are sometimes required by law, to disclose your health information to public authorities for purposes related to: preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability; reporting child, elder or dependent adult abuse or neglect; reporting domestic violence; reporting to the Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medications; and reporting disease or infection exposure.
9. Health Oversight Activities. We may, and are sometimes required by law, to disclose your health information to health oversight agencies during the course of audits, investigations, inspections, licensure and other proceedings.
10. Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. We may, and are sometimes required by law, to disclose your health information in the course of any administrative or judicial proceeding to the extent expressly authorized by a court or administrative order.
11. Law Enforcement. We may, and are sometimes required by law, to disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for purposes such as identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, complying with a court order, warrant, grand jury subpoena and other law enforcement purposes.
12. Organ or Tissue Donation. We may disclose your health information to organizations involved in procuring, banking or transplanting organs and tissues.
13. Specialized Government Functions. We may disclose your health information for military or national security purposes or to correctional institutions or law enforcement officers that have you in their lawful custody.
14. Workers' Compensation. We may disclose your health information as necessary to comply with Workers' Compensation laws.
15. Change of Ownership. In the event that this medical practice is sold or merged with another organization, your health information/record may be transferred to the new owner, although you will maintain the right to request that copies of your health information be transferred to another physician or medical group.

B. When This Medical Practice May Not Use or Disclose Your Health Information

Except as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices, this medical practice will not use or disclose health information, which identifies you without your written authorization. If you do authorize this medical practice to use or disclose your health information for another purpose, you may revoke your authorization in writing at any time, except to the extent that we have already taken action in reliance on the authorization.

C. Your Health Information Rights

1. Right to Request Special Privacy Protections. You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information, by submitting a written request specifying what information you want to limit and what limitations on our use or disclosure of that information you wish to have imposed. We reserve the right to accept or reject your request, and will notify you of our decision.
2. Right to Inspect and Copy. You have the right to inspect and copy your health information, with limited exceptions. To access your medical information, you must submit a written request detailing what information you want access to and whether you want to inspect it or get a copy of it. We will charge a reasonable fee, as allowed by Connecticut law. We may deny your request under limited circumstances.
3. Right to Amend or Supplement. You have the right to request that we amend your health information that you believe is incorrect or incomplete. You must make a request to amend in writing, and include the reasons you believe the information is inaccurate or incomplete. We are not required to change your health information, and will provide you with information about this medical practice's denial and how you can disagree with the denial. We may deny your request if we do not have the information.
4. Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have a right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your health information made by this medical practice, except that this medical practice does not have to account for the disclosures provided to you or pursuant to your written authorization, or as described in paragraphs 1 (treatment), 2 (payment), 3 (health care operations), 6 (notification and communication with family) and 13 (certain government functions) of this Notice of Privacy Practices.

D. Changes to this Notice of Privacy Practices

We reserve the right to amend this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time in the future. Until such amendment is made, we are required by law to comply with this Notice. After an amendment is made, the revised Notice of Privacy Protections will apply to all protected health information that we maintain, regardless of when it was created or received. We will keep a copy of the current notice posted in our reception area, and provide you with a copy upon request.

E. Complaints

Complaints about this Notice of Privacy Practices or how this medical practice handles your health information should be directed to our Office Manager.

You may also submit a complaint to:

Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.