

Effective date of notice: **09/23/2013**

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

**Image Eye Care, LLC**  
1120 Wolfrum Road  
Suite 106  
Weldon Spring, MO 63304  
(636) 447-2244 Fax: (636) 447-2213  
info@ImageEyeCareSTL.com

HIPAA Compliance Officer: Todd Hamilton, OD

### **THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.**

We respect our legal obligation to keep health information that identifies you private. We are obligated by law to give you notice of our privacy practices. This Notice describes how we protect your health information and what rights you have regarding it.

#### **TREATMENT, PAYMENT, AND HEALTHCARE OPERATIONS**

The most common reason why we use or disclose your health information is for treatment, payment or healthcare operations. Examples of how we use or disclose information for treatment purposes are: setting up an appointment for you; testing or examining your eyes; prescribing glasses, contact lenses, or eye medications and faxing them to be filled; showing you low vision aids; referring you to another doctor or clinic for eye care or low vision aids or services; or getting copies of your health information from another professional that you may have seen before us. Examples of how we use or disclose your health information for payment purposes are: asking you about your health or vision plans, or other sources of payment; preparing or sending bills or claims; and collection unpaid amounts (either ourselves or through a collection agency or attorney). "Healthcare operations" mean those administrative and managerial functions that we have to do in order to run our office. Examples of how we use or disclose your health information for health care operations are: financial or billing audits; internal quality assurance; personnel decisions; participation in managed care plans; defense of legal matters; business planning; and outside storage of our records.

We routinely use your health information inside our office for these purposes without any special permission. If we need to disclose health information outside of our office for these reasons we will ask you for special written permission.

#### **USES AND DISCLOSURES FOR OTHER REASONS WITHOUT PERMISSION**

In some limited situations, the law allows or requires us to use or disclose your health information without your permission. Not all these situations will apply to us; some may never come up at our office at all. Such disclosures are:

- When a state or federal law mandates that certain health information be reported for a specific purpose;
- For public health purposes, such as contagious disease reporting, investigation or surveillance; and notices to and from the Federal Food and Drug Administration regarding drugs or medical devices;
- Disclosures to governmental authorities about victims of suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
- Uses and disclosures for health oversight activities, such as for licensing of doctors; for audits by Medicare or Medicaid; or for investigation of possible violations of health care laws;
- Disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings, such as in response to subpoenas or orders of courts or administrative agencies;

- Disclosures for law enforcement purposes, such as to provide information about someone who is or is suspect to be a victim of a crime; to provide information about a crime at our office; or to report a crime that happened somewhere else;

- Disclosure to a medical examiner to identify a dead person or to determine the cause of death; or to funeral directors to aid in burial; or to organizations that handle organ or tissue donations;

- Uses or disclosures for health related research;

- Uses or disclosures for specialized government functions, such as for the protection of the president or high ranking government officials; for lawful national intelligence activities; for military purposes; or for the evaluation and health of members of the foreign service;

- Disclosures of de-identified information;

- Disclosures relating to worker's compensation programs;

- Disclosures of a "limited data set" for research, public health, or healthcare operations;

- Incidental disclosures that are an unavoidable by-product of permitted uses or disclosures;

- Disclosures to "business associates" who perform healthcare operations for us and who commit to respect the privacy of your health information;

Unless you object, we will also share relevant information about your care with your family who are helping you with your eye care.

#### **APPOINTMENT REMINDERS**

We may call or write to remind you of scheduled appointments, or that is time to make a routine appointment. We may also call or write to notify you of other treatment or services available at our office that might help you. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will mail you an appointment reminder on a post card, and/or leave you a message on your home answering machine or with someone who answers your phone if you are not at home.

#### **OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES**

We will not make any other uses or disclosures of your health information (such as for 3<sup>rd</sup> party marketing or fundraising) unless you sign a written "authorization form." The consent of an "authorization form" is determined by federal law. Sometimes, we may initiate the authorization process if the use or disclosure is our idea. Sometimes, you may initiate the process if it's your idea for us to send your information to someone else. Typically, in this situation you will give us a properly completed authorization form, or you can use one of ours. If we initiate the process and ask you to sign an authorization form, you do not have to sign it. If you do not sign the authorization, we cannot make the use or disclosure. If you do sign one, you may revoke it at any time unless we have already acted in reliance upon it. Revocations must be in writing. Send them to the office contact person named at the beginning of this Notice. We will not sell your health information to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. In the unlikely event we obtain psychotherapy notes as part of your transferred health records, we will not share those portions of the records with other providers without your written authorization.

#### **WEBSITE**

If you view our website or complete forms on our website, certain information including domain name, IP addresses may be collected in the course of your visit. Such information is used only in aggregate statistical format to help us make our web site more useful. No individual or personal identifiable information is permanently stored other than what you may specifically provide (e.g. an email address). Our web site may use "cookies" i.e. a piece of data stored on the user's computer. Usage of a cookie is not linked to any personally identifiable information on our web site. All cookies on our website are terminated once the user closes their web browser. Visitors to our website may be linked to the other websites, including those of business

associates and service providers we use. We are not responsible for any information collected by any website linked from our website nor do the rights and obligations, nor the policies regarding the use and disclosure of your health information indicated in this Notice apply.

## **YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

The law gives you many rights regarding your health information. You can:

- Ask us to restrict our users and disclosures for purposes of treatment (except emergency treatment), payment or healthcare operations. We do not have to agree to do this, but if we agree, we must honor the restrictions that you want. To ask for a restriction, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Ask us to communicate with you in a confidential way, such as by phoning you at work rather than at home, by mailing health information to a different address, or by using email to your personal email address. We will accommodate these requests if they are reasonable, and if you pay us for any extra cost. If you want to ask for confidential communications, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Ask to see or get photocopies of your health information. By law, there are a few limited situations in which we can refuse to permit access or copying. For the most part, however, you will be able to review or have a copy of your health information within 30 days of asking us or (60 days if the information is stored off-site). You may have to pay for photocopies in advance. If we deny your request, we will send you a written explanation, and instructions about how to get an impartial review of our denial if one is legally available. By law, we can have one 30 day extension of the time for us to give you access of photocopies if we notify you in writing of the extension. If you want to ask us to amend your health information, send a written request, including your reasons for amendment, to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Get a list of the disclosures that we have made of your health information within the past six years (or a shorter period if you want). By law, the list will not include: disclosures for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations; disclosures with your authorization; incidental disclosures; disclosures required by law; and some other limited disclosures. You are entitled to one such list per year without charge. If you want more frequent lists, you will have to pay for them in advance. We will usually respond to your request within 60 days of receiving it, but by law we can have one 30 day extension of time if we notify you of the extension in writing. If you want a list, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this Notice.
- Get additional paper copies of this Notice of Privacy Practices upon request. It does not matter whether you got one electronically or in paper form already. If you want additional copies, send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this Notice.

## **OUR NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

By law, we must abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices until we choose to change it. We reserve the right to change this notice at any time as allowed by law. If we change this Notice, the new privacy practices will apply to your health information that we already have as well as such information that we may generate in the future. If we change our Notice of Privacy Practices, we will post the new notice in our office, have copies available in our office, and post it our Web site.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you think that we have not properly respected the privacy of your health information, you are free to complain to us or to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights. We will not retaliate against you if you make a complaint. If you want to complain to us, send a written complaint to the office contact person at the address, fax or Email shown at the beginning of this Notice. If you prefer, you can discuss your complaint in person or by phone.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you want more information about our privacy practices, call or visit the office contact person at the address of phone number shown at the beginning of this Notice.