

HIPAA NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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 describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations (TPO) and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information.

"Protected health information" is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health condition and related health care services.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION: Your protected health information may be used and disclosed by your physician, our office staff and others outside of our office that are involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you, to pay your health care bills, to support the operation of the physician's practice, and any other use required by law.

TREATMENT: We will use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party. For example, your protected health information may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you.

PAYMENT: Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital stay may require that your relevant protected health information be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission.

HEALTHCARE OPERATIONS: We may call you by name in the waiting room when your physician is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment, and inform you about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. We may use or disclose your protected health information in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include: as required by law, public health issues as required by law, communicable diseases, health oversight, abuse or neglect, food and drug administration requirements, legal proceedings, law enforcement, coroners, funeral directors, organ donation, research, criminal activity, military activity and national security, workers' compensation, inmates, and other required uses and disclosures. Under the law, we must make disclosures to you upon your request. Under the law, we must also disclose your protected health information when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements under Section 164.500.

YOUR RIGHTS: The following are statements of your rights with respect to your protected health information.

*You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information (fees may apply)

*If your Protected Health Information is maintained in an electronic format (known as an electronic medical record or an electronic health record), you have the right to request that an electronic copy of your record be given to you or transmitted to another individual or entity.

*If the Protected Health Information is not readily producible in the form or format you request your record will be provided in either our standard electronic format or if you do not want this form or format, a readable hard copy form. We have up to 30 days to make your Protected Health Information available to you and we may charge you a reasonable fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request. We may not charge you a fee if you need the information for a claim for benefits under the Social Security Act or any other state or federal needs-based benefit program.

*You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information – This means you may ask us not to use or disclose any part of your protected health information and by law we must comply when the protected health information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which the health care provider involved has been paid out of pocket in full.

*You may request that any part of your protected health information not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. By law, you may not request that we restrict the disclosure of your PHI for treatment purposes.

* You have the right to request to receive confidential communications

*You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us, upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this notice alternatively i.e. electronically.

*You have the right to request an amendment to your protected health information – If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal.

*You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures – You have the right to receive an accounting of all disclosures except for disclosures: pursuant to an authorization, for purposes of treatment, payment, healthcare operations; required by law, that occurred prior to April 14, 2003, or six years prior to the date of this request.

*You have the right to receive a Breach Notification. You have the right to receive a notification upon a breach of any of your unsecured Protected Health Information.

*You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and we will notify you of such changes on the following appointment. We will also make available copies of our new notice if you wish to obtain one.

COMPLAINTS You may file a complaint with us or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our Compliance Officer of your complaint. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of, and provide individuals with, this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information. We are also required to abide by the terms of the notice currently in effect. If you have any questions in reference to this form, please ask to speak with our HIPAA Compliance Officer in person or by phone at our main phone number (616) 534-4953.

For more information about HIPPA, or to file a complaint:
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC, 20201
Toll Free: 1-877-696-6775

By signing below I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and accept West Michigan Vision Specialists Notice of HIPAA Privacy Practices as shown above.

Signature of Authorized Party

Date