

## SWEENEY EYE ASSOCIATES

### 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.

**The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”) is a federal program that requests that all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by us in any form, whether electronically, on paper, or orally are kept properly confidential. This Act gives you, the patient, the right to understand and control how your protected health information (“PHI”) is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse protected health information.**

**As required by HIPAA, we prepared this explanation of how we are to maintain the privacy of your health information and how we may disclose your personal information.**

**We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal and are committed to protecting this information.**

#### **OUR POLICY**

Sweeney Eye Associates shall make every effort to maintain the privacy of your medical information and abide by the terms of this notice.

We will notify you, and the Department of Health & Human Services, of any unauthorized acquisition, access, use or disclosure of your unsecured medical information that presents a significant risk of financial, reputational or other harm to you, to the extent required by law. Unsecured medical information means medical information not secured by technology that renders the information unusable, unreadable, or indecipherable as required by law.

#### **HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

We may use and disclose your medical records only for each of the following purposes: treatment, payment and health care operations.

**Treatment** means providing, coordinating or managing your health care and any related services by one or more healthcare providers.

For example, we may share your information with

your primary care physician or other specialists to whom you are referred for follow-up care.

**Payment** means such activities as obtaining reimbursement for services, confirming coverage, billing or collections activities, and utilization review. For example, we would send your insurance company a bill for your visit and/or verifying coverage prior to a surgery.

**Health Care Operations** include business aspects of running our practice, such as conducting quality assessments and improving activities, auditing functions, cost management analysis and customer service. An example of this would be new patient survey cards. In addition, medical records are audited for timely documentation and correct billing.

The practice may also disclose your PHI for law enforcement and other legitimate reasons although we shall do our best to assure its continued confidentiality to the extent possible.

We may also create and distribute de-identified health information by removing all reference to individually identifiable information.

We may contact you by phone or in writing, to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services in addition to other fundraising communications that may be of interest to you. You do have the right to “opt out” with respect to receiving communications from us.

The following use and disclosures of PHI will only be made pursuant to us receiving a written authorization from you:

Most uses and disclosure of psychotherapy notes

Uses and disclosure of your PHI for marketing Purposes, including subsidized treatment and Health care operations.

Disclosures that constitute a sale of PHI under HIPPA

Other uses and disclosures not described in this

notice.

You may revoke such authorization in writing and we are required to honor and abide by that written request, except to the extent that we have already taken actions relying on your authorization.

#### **Your Rights**

You may have the following rights with respect to your PHI.

- The right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of PHI, including those related to disclosures of family members, other relatives, close personal friends, or any other person identified by you. We are, however, not required to honor a request restrictions except in limited circumstances which we shall explain if you ask. If we do agree to the restriction, we must abide by it unless you agree in writing to remove it.
- The right to reasonable requests to receive confidential communications of PHI by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- The right to inspect and copy your PHI.
- The right to amend your PHI.
- The right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your PHI.
- The right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us upon request.
- The right to be advised if your unprotected PHI is intentionally or unintentionally disclosed.

#### **Services Paid in Full**

If you have paid for services “out of pocket”, in full, and you request that we not disclose PHI related solely to those services to a health plan, we will accommodate your request, except where we are required by law to make a disclosure.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI and to provide you the notice of our legal duties and our privacy practice with respect to PHI.

This notice is effective as of September 23, 2013 and it is our intention to abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices and HIPPA Regulations currently in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of Notice of Privacy Practices and to make the new notice provision effective for all PHI that we maintain. We will post and you may request a

written copy of the revised Notice Privacy Practices from our office.

You have recourse if you feel that your protections have been violated by our office. You have the right to file a formal, written complaint with our office and with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

US Dept. of Health & Human Services  
1301 Young Street, Suite 1169  
Dallas, TX 75202

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