

Columbia Eye Clinic, P.A. Columbia Eye Surgery Center, Inc.

1920 Pickens Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 779-3070

100 Palmetto Park Blvd.
Lexington, SC 29072
(803) 806-0080

100 Summit Centre Dr.
Columbia, SC 29229
(803) 252-8566

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

OUR LEGAL DUTY:

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We are also required to give you this Notice about our privacy practices, our legal duty, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practice and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. For example:

Treatment: We use or disclose your health information to a physician or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you. For example, a doctor treating you for diabetes would need to know if diabetic changes are present in your eyes.

Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you. For example, we may need to give information about your surgery to your insurance company so they will pay for the surgery.

Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualification of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditations, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

Your Authorization: In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

To Your Family and Friends: We must disclose your health information to you, as described in the Patient Rights section of this Notice. We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

Persons Involved In Care: We may use or disclose health information to assist in the notification of a family member or another person responsible for your care of your general condition. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. We will also use our professional judgment and our experience with common practices to make reasonable inferences of your best interest in allowing a person to pick up prescriptions, medical supplies, or other similar forms of health information.

Marketing Health-Related Services: We will not use your health information for marketing communications without your written authorization.

Workman's Compensation: We may disclose health information to the extent necessary to comply with the laws related to Workman's Compensation.

Required by Law: We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

Abuse or Neglect: We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

Appointment Reminders: We may use or disclose your health information for the use of communications to you. Some examples of this include but are not limited to postcards, email, or an automated telephone system. We may use your name, address, and phone number, the name of your scheduled treating physician, and the time and place of your scheduled appointment for the limited purpose of contacting you to notify you of a pending appointment or other healthcare related communication.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Access: You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. (You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a format to request access at any of our locations. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for a full explanation of our fee structure.)

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Restriction: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency.)

Alternative Communication: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations (You must make your request in writing.) Your request must specify the alternative means or locations, and provide satisfactory explanation how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your health information. (Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended.) We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

Electronic Notice: If you receive this Notice on our Web Site or by electronic mail (email), you are entitled to receive this Notice in written form.

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us. If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us or with the Office of Civil Rights.

Nancy Brooks, HIPAA Privacy Contact (803) 806-0075

Garner Wild, MD, HIPAA Privacy Officer (803) 806-0080