

St. Lucie Eye Associates St. Lucie Optical St. Lucie Optical West 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.

If you have any questions about this Notice please contact: our Privacy Contact who is Christopher Channon, MD

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations 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 or condition and related health care services.

We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We may change the terms of our notice, at any time. The new notice will be effective for all protected health information that we maintain at that time. Upon your request, we will provide you with any revised Notice of Privacy Practices by accessing our website www.stlucieeye.com, calling the office and requesting that a revised copy be sent to you in the mail or asking for one at the time of your next appointment.

1. 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. Your protected health information may also be used and disclosed to pay your health care bills and to support the operation of the physician's practice.

Following are examples of the types of uses and disclosures of your protected health care information that the physician's office is permitted to make once you have signed our consent form. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but to describe the types of uses and disclosures that may be made by our office once you have provided consent.

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 that has already obtained your permission to have access to your protected health information. For example, we would disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you. We will also disclose protected health information to other physicians who may be treating you.

In addition, we may disclose your protected health information from time-to-time to another physician or health care provider (e.g., a specialist or laboratory) who, at the request of your physician, becomes involved in your care by providing assistance with your health care diagnosis or treatment to your physician.

Payment: Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. This may include certain activities that your health insurance plan may undertake before it approves or pays for the health care services we recommend for you such as; making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities. 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 use or disclose, as-needed, your protected health information in order to support the business activities of your physician's practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of medical students, licensing, marketing and fundraising activities, and conducting or arranging for other business activities.

Examples of this include, but are not limited to sign in sheets for appointments, calling your name at the time of examination, and mailing (post card) or calling you to confirm appointments. During the course of your examination, we might offer to show you educational materials or videos that might also be seen by other patients. During the course of your examination, other persons (ie patients, family members, etc), may overhear discussions of your condition

We will share your protected health information with third party "business associates" that perform various activities (e.g., billing, transcription services) for the practice. Business associates are required to have similar privacy notices that are available on request. If you call our office after hours, you may reach the answering service. Any information you disclose to the service will fall under the privacy policies of the service, and therefore you should contact that business for related questions.

We may use or disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. We may also use and disclose your protected health information for other marketing activities. This might include newsletters or emails.

If, in the judgment of the physician or the staff, it is in the patient's best interest to disclose PHI to a family member, friend or other person this will be done, unless the Privacy Officer is otherwise notified.

If any of these or similar privacy issues are a concern to you, please contact our staff or privacy officer so that alternative arrangements may be considered.

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information Based upon Your Written Authorization

Other uses and disclosures of your protected health information will be made only with your written authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law as described below. You may revoke this authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your physician or the physician's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization. For example, we will release copies of your records, only with your specific authorization.

Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made With Your Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object

We may use and disclose your protected health information in the following instances. You have the opportunity to agree or object to the use or disclosure of all or part of your protected health

information. If you are not present or able to agree or object to the use or disclosure of the protected health information, then your physician may, using professional judgement, determine whether the disclosure is in your best interest. In this case, only the protected health information that is relevant to your health care will be disclosed.

Others Involved in Your Healthcare: Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, your protected health information that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment.

Emergencies: We may use or disclose your protected health information in an emergency treatment situation. If this happens, your physician shall try to obtain your consent as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of treatment. If your physician or another physician in the practice is required by law to treat you and the physician has attempted to obtain your consent but is unable to obtain your consent, he or she may still use or disclose your protected health information to treat you.

Department of Motor Vehicles: Occasionally, in the judgement of the physician, a patient fails to meet the requirements for driving a motor vehicle in the State of Florida. If the physician judges that this may potentially result in a safety concern to the patient or others, the information may be reported to the appropriate authorities. This will be reported to the patient at the time notification is sent to the DMV.

Communication Barriers: We may use and disclose your protected health information if your physician or another physician in the practice attempts to obtain consent from you but is unable to do so due to substantial communication barriers and the physician determines, using professional judgement, that you intend to consent to use or disclosure under the circumstances.

Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made Without Your Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object

Required By Law: We may use or disclose your protected health information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

Public Health:

Communicable Diseases:

Health Oversight:

Abuse or Neglect:

Food and Drug Administration:

Legal Proceedings:

Law Enforcement:

Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation:

Research:

Criminal Activity:

Workers' Compensation:

Inmates:

Required Uses and Disclosures: Under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500 et. seq.

2. Your Rights

You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information. This means you may inspect and obtain a copy of protected health information about you that is contained in a designated record set for as long as we maintain the protected health information. A "designated record set" contains medical and billing records and any other records that your physician and the practice uses for making decisions about you.

Under federal law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records; psychotherapy notes; information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, and protected health information that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information. Depending on the circumstances, a decision to deny access may be reviewable. In some circumstances, you may have a right to have this decision reviewed. Please contact our Privacy Contact if you have questions about access to your medical record.

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 for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You may also 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.

Your physician is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If physician believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted. If your physician does agree to the requested restriction, we may not use or disclose your protected health information in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. With this in mind, please discuss any restriction you wish to request with your physician. You may request a restriction by **contacting our privacy officer or designate office personnel.**

You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. We will accommodate reasonable requests. We may also condition this accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other method of contact. We will not

request an explanation from you as to the basis for the request. Please make this request in writing to our Privacy Contact.

You may have the right to have your physician amend your protected health information.

This means you may request an amendment of protected health information about you in a designated record set for as long as we maintain this information. In certain cases, we may deny your request for an amendment. 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. Please contact our Privacy Contact to determine if you have questions about amending your medical record.

You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information.

This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. It excludes disclosures we may have made to you, for a facility directory, to family members or friends involved in your care, or for notification purposes. You have the right to receive specific information regarding these disclosures that occurred after April 14, 2003. You may request a shorter timeframe. The right to receive this information is subject to certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations.

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 electronically.

3. Complaints

You may complain to us or to 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 privacy contact of your complaint. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

You may contact our Privacy Contact, **Christopher Channon**, MD at 2201 S. 10th St. Fort Pierce, FL 34950 for further information about the complaint process.

This notice was published and becomes effective on **April 14, 2003**

ST LUCIE EYE ASSOCIATES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AMEND THIS PRIVACY NOTICE AT ANY TIME.

A COPY OF OUR PRIVACY POLICY IS AVAILABLE IN OUR OFFICES, OR ONLINE AT

WWW.STLUCIEEYE.COM