

EYES on Lake Stevens PLLC

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NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: November 23, 2022

THIS NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES DESCRIBES HOW WE MAY USE OR DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO SUCH INFORMATION. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. *Your "health information," for purposes of this Notice, is generally any information that identifies you and is created, received, maintained or transmitted by us in the course of providing health care items or services to you (referred to as "health information" in this Notice).*

We are required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") and other applicable laws to maintain the privacy of your health information, to provide individuals with this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to such information, and to abide by the terms of this Notice. We are also required by law to notify affected individuals following a breach of their unsecured health information.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

The most common reasons why we use or disclose your health information are for treatment, payment or health care operations. Examples of how we use or disclose your health 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 care plans, or other sources of payment; preparing and sending bills or claims; and collecting unpaid amounts (either ourselves or through a collection agency or attorney). "Health care operations" mean those administrative and managerial functions that we must carry out 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 your health information outside of our office for these reasons, we usually will not ask you for special written permission.

OTHER DISCLOSURES AND USES WE MAY MAKE WITHOUT YOUR AUTHORIZATION OR CONSENT

In some limited situations, the law allows or requires us to use or disclose your health information without your consent or authorization. Not all of these situations will apply to us; some may never come up at our office at all. Such uses or 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 the 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 suspected 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 and disclosures to prevent a serious threat to health or safety;
- 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 health care operations;
- incidental disclosures that are an unavoidable by-product of permitted uses or disclosures;
- disclosures to "business associates" and their subcontractors who perform health care operations for us and who commit to respect the privacy of your health information in accordance with HIPAA

Unless you object, we will also share relevant information about your care with any of your personal representatives who are helping you with your eye care.

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

We may call or write to remind you of scheduled appointments, or that it is time to make a routine appointment. We may also call or write to notify you of other treatments 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 reminder message on your home answering machine or with someone who answers your phone if you are not home.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES

We will not make any other uses or disclosures of your health information unless you sign a written "authorization form". The content of that "authorization form" is determined by federal law. 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 of disclosure. If you do sign one, you may revoke it at any time. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your health information for the reasons described in the authorization. However, we are generally unable to retract any disclosures that we may have already made with your authorization. We may also be required to disclose health information as necessary for purposes of payment for services received by you prior to the date you revoked your authorization. Revocations must be in writing. Send them to the Office Manager named at the beginning of this Notice.

YOUR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

You have many rights concerning the confidentiality of your health information. You have the right:

- **To request restrictions on the health information we may use and disclose for treatment (except for emergency treatment), payment, and health care operations.** We are not required to agree to these requests. To request restrictions, please send a written request to us at the address at the beginning of the Notice.
- **To receive confidential communications of health information about you in any manner other than described in our authorization request form.** You must make such requests in writing to the address at the beginning of the Notice. However, we reserve the right to determine if we will be able to continue your treatment under such restrictive authorizations.
- **To see or copy your health information.** You must make such requests in writing to the address at the beginning of the Notice. If you request a copy of your health information we may charge you a fee for the cost of copying, mailing or other supplies. By law you will be able to review or have a copy of your health information within 15 days of asking us. In certain circumstances we may deny your request to inspect or copy your health information, subject to applicable law.
- **To amend health information.** If you feel that health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. To request an amendment, you must write to us at the address at the beginning of the Notice. You must also give us a reason to support your request. If we agree, we will amend the information within 60 days from when you ask us. We may deny your request to amend your health information if it is not in writing or does not provide a reason to support your request. We may also deny your request if the health information:
 - was not created by us, unless the person that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment,
 - is not part of the health information kept by or for us,
 - is not part of the information you would be permitted to inspect or copy, or
 - is accurate and complete.

- **To receive a list of disclosures of your health information.** You must make such requests in writing to the address at the beginning of this Notice. Not all health information is subject to this request. Your request must state a time period for the information you would like to receive, no longer than 6 years prior to the date of your request and may not include dates before November 23, 2022. Your request must state how you would like to receive the report (paper, electronically).
- **To designate another party to receive your health information.** If your request for access of your health information directs us to transmit a copy of the health information directly to another person the request must be made by you in writing to the address at the beginning of this Notice and must clearly identify the designated recipient and where to send the copy of the health information.

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 for 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 Manager at the address listed at the beginning of this notice. If you prefer, you can discuss your complaint in person or by phone.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and to apply the revised practices to health information about you that we already have. Any revision to our privacy practices will be described in a revised Notice that will be posted prominently in our facility. Copies of this Notice are also available upon request at our reception area.

Notice Revised and Effective: **November 23, 2022.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I acknowledge that I received a copy of Eyes on Lake Steven's Notice of Privacy Practices.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____