

Effective date of notice: January 2010

## **Notice of Privacy Practices**

Albany Eye Care  
418 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Laramie, WY 82070  
Phone: (307) 745-8554  
Fax: (307)755-5929

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**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU  
MAY BE USED, DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION.  
PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

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We respect our legal obligation to keep health information that identifies you private. We are obligated by law to give you notice of our privacy practices. This Notice describes how we protect your health information and your rights.

### **TREATMENT, PAYMENT, AND HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS**

The most common reason why we use or disclose your health information is for treatment, payment, or health care operations. Examples of how we use or disclose information for treatment purposes are: setting up an appointment for you; testing or examining your eyes; prescribing your 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 previously. 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 have to do in order 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.

### **USES AND DISCLOSURES FOR OTHER REASONS WITHOUT PERMISSION**

In some limited situations, the law allows or requires us to use or disclose your health information without your permission. Not all of these situations apply. 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 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 of 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" who perform health care operations and who commit to respect the privacy of your health information.

Unless you object, we will also share relevant information about your care with your family or friends 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 service 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 an "authorization form" is determined by federal law. We may initiate the authorization process if the use or disclosure is our idea. You may initiate the process if it's your idea for us to send your information to someone else. In this situation you will give us a properly completed authorization form, or you can use a form available at our office.

If we initiate the process and ask you to sign an authorization form, you are not obligated to sign. If you do not sign the authorization, we cannot make the use or disclosure. If you do sign one, you may revoke it at any time unless we have already acted in reliance upon it. Revocations must be in writing.

## **YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

The law gives you many rights regarding your health information. You can:

- Ask us to restrict our uses and disclosures for purposes of treatment (except emergency treatment), payment or health care operations. We do not have to agree to do this, however if we do agree, we must honor the restrictions you request. To ask for a restriction, send a written request to the office at the above address or fax given at the beginning of this Notice.
- Ask us to communicate with you in a confidential way, such as by phoning you at work rather than at home, by mailing health information to a different address, or by using e-mail to your personal e-mail address. We will accommodate these requests if they are reasonable, and if you pay us for any extra cost. If you want to ask for confidential communications, send a written request to the office address or fax shown at the beginning of the Notice.
- Ask to see or obtain photocopies of your health information. By law, there are a few limited situations in which we can refuse to permit access or copying. However for the most part, you will be able to review or have a copy of your health information within 30 days request (or sixty days if the information is stored off-site). You may have to pay for photocopies in advance. If we deny your request we will send you a written explanation, and instructions about how to get an impartial review of our denial if one is legally available. By law, we are allowed one 30-day extension if we send you notice in writing. If you want to review or get photocopies of your health information, send a written request to the office at the above address or fax.
- Ask us to amend your health information if you think that it is incorrect or incomplete. If we agree, we will amend the information within 60 days of the request date. We will send the corrected information to all persons who received wrong information and others that you specify. If we do not agree, you can write a statement of you position, and we will include it with your health information along with any rebuttal statement that we may write. Once your statement of position and/or our rebuttal is included in your health information, we will send it along whenever we make a permitted disclosure of your health information. By law, we are allowed one 30-day extension to consider a request for amendment if we notify you in writing. To request an amendment, send a written request, including your reasons for the amendment to our office address or fax listed at the beginning of this Notice.
- Get a list of the disclosures that we have made of your health information within the past six years (or a shorter period if you want). By law, the list will not include: disclosures for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations; disclosures with your authorizations; incidental disclosures; disclosures required by law; and some other limited disclosures. You are entitled to one such list per year without charge. If you want more frequent lists, you will have to pay for them in advance. We will usually respond to your request within 60 days, but by law we are allowed one 30-day extension if you are notified in writing. If you want a list, send a written request to our office address or fax listed at the beginning of this Notice.
- Get additional paper copies of this Notice of Privacy Practices upon request. If you would like additional paper copies, send a written request to the office address or fax listed at the beginning of this Notice.

## **OUR NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

By law, we must abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We reserve the right to change this notice at any time as allowed by law. If we change this Notice, the new privacy practices will apply to your health information that we already have as well as to such information that we may generate in the future. If we change our Notice of Privacy Practices, we will post the new notice in our office, have copies available in our office, and post it on our web site.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you think that we have not properly respected the privacy of your health information, you are free to complain to us or 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 address or fax shown at the beginning of this Notice. If you prefer, you can discuss your complaint in person or by phone.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you want more information about our privacy practices, call or visit our office at the address or phone number shown at the beginning of this Notice.

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