

Plaza Vision Center Notice of Privacy Practices

Clarke D. Newman, OD, PC
d/b/a Plaza Vision Center
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Clarke D. Newman, OD, FAO, Privacy Officer

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE STATE AND FEDERAL PRIVACY RULES, THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO IT. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY

We respect our legal obligation to keep private any health information that might identify you. We are obligated by law to provide you with notice of our privacy practices. This notice describes how we protect your health information, and what rights you have regarding it.

TREATMENT, PAYMENT, AND HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS

The most common reasons we would use or disclose your health information is for treatment, payment, or business operations. We routinely use and disclose medical information among the office staff. We do not need specific permission to use or disclose your medical information in the following matters, although you have the right to request that we do not.

Examples of how we might use or disclose health information for treatment purposes might include:

Making or changing appointments, including leaving messages with those at your home or office who may answer the phone, or leaving messages on answering machines, voice mails or e-mails; prescribing glasses, contact lenses, or medications, as well as relaying this information to suppliers by phone, fax or other electronic means including initial prescriptions and requests from suppliers for refills; notifying you that your ophthalmic goods are ready, including leaving messages at your home or office with whomever may answer the telephone, or leaving messages on answering machines, voice mails or e-mails; referring you to another doctor for care not provided by this office; obtaining copies of health information from doctors you have seen before us; discussing your care with you directly or with family or friends you have inferred or agreed may listen to information about your health; sending you postcards or letters or leaving messages with those at your home who may answer the phone or on answering machines, voice mails or e-mails reminding you it is time for continued care.

Examples of how we might use or disclose health information for payment purposes might include:

Asking you about your vision or medical insurance plans or other sources of payment; preparing and sending bills to your insurance provider or to you; providing any information required by third party payers to insure payment for services rendered to you; collecting unpaid balances either ourselves or through a collection agency, attorney, or district attorney's office.

Examples of how we might use or disclose health information for health care operations might include:

Financial or billing audits; internal quality assurance programs; participation in managed care plans; defense of legal matters; business planning; certain research functions; informing you of products or services offered by our office; compliance with local, state, or federal government agencies request for information; oversight activities such as licensing of our doctors; Medicare or Medicaid audits.

USES AND DISCLOSURES FOR OTHER REASONS NOT NEEDING PERMISSION

In some other limited situations, the law allows us to use or disclose your medical information without your specific permission. Most of these situations will never apply to you, but they could.

- When a state or federal law mandates that certain health information be reported for a specific purpose
- For public health reasons, such as the reporting of a contagious disease, investigations or surveillance, and notices to and from the Federal Food and Drug Administration regarding drugs or medical devices
- Disclosures to government or law enforcement agencies about victims of suspected abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or when someone is, or suspected to have been, a victim of a crime
- Disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings, such as in response to subpoenas or orders of courts or administrative hearings
- Disclosures to a medical examiner to identify a deceased person or determine cause of death or to funeral directors to aid in burial
- Disclosures to organizations that handle organ or tissue donations
- Uses or disclosures for health related research
- Uses or disclosures to prevent a serious threat to the health or safety of an individual or individuals
- Uses or disclosures to aid military purposes or lawful national intelligence activities
- Disclosures of de-identified information
- Disclosures related to a workman's compensation claim
- 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 and disclosures
- Disclosures to business associates who perform health care operations for Clarke D. Newman, OD, PC d/b/a Plaza Vision Center, and who commit to respect the privacy of your information
- Unless you object, disclosure of relevant health information to family members or friends who are helping you with your care, who through their presence, implies that we may do so

USES OR DISCLOSURES TO PATIENT REPRESENTATIVES (DESIGNATED AGENT)

It is the policy of Plaza Vision Center for the staff to take phone calls from individuals, acting as your designated agent, requesting information about making or changing an appointment; the status of eyeglasses, contact lenses, or other optical goods ordered by or for you. The staff will make every effort to insure that the individual is in fact your designated agent. The Plaza Vision Center staff will also assist individuals on your behalf in the delivery of eyeglasses, contact lenses, or other optical goods. During a telephone or an in-person contact, every effort will be made to limit the encounter to only the specifics needed to complete the transaction required. No information about your vision or health status shall be disclosed without proper patient consent. The Plaza Vision Center staff and doctors will also infer that if you allow another person in an examination or treatment room with you while testing is performed or discussions held about your vision or health care that you consent to the presence of that individual.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES

We will not make any other use or disclosure of your health information unless you sign a written *Authorization for Release of Identifying Health Information*. Federal law determines the content of this authorization. The request for signing an authorization may be initiated by Clarke D. Newman, OD, PC, or by you as the patient. We will comply with your request if it is applicable to the State or the Federal policies regarding authorizations. If we ask you to sign an authorization, you may decline to do so. If you do not sign the authorization, we may not use or disclose the information we intended to use. If you do elect to sign the authorization, you may revoke it at any time. Revocation requests must be made in writing to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

The law gives you many rights regarding your personal health information.

You may ask us to restrict our uses and disclosures for purposes of treatment (except in emergency care), payment, or business operations. This request must be made in writing to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice. We do not have to agree to your request, but if we agree, we must abide by the restrictions you ask for.

You may ask us to communicate with you in a confidential manner. Examples might be only contacting you by telephone at your home or using some special e-mail address. We will accommodate these requests if they are reasonable and if you agree to pay any additional cost, if any, incurred in accommodating your request. Requests for special communication requests must be made to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice.

You may ask to review or get copies of your health information. There are a very few limited situations in which we may refuse your access to your health information. For the most part, we are happy to provide you with the opportunity to either review or obtain a copy of your medical information. All requests for review or copy of medical information must be made in writing to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice. While we usually respond to these requests in just a day or so, by law we have fifteen (15) days to respond to your request. We may request an additional thirty (30) day extension in certain situations.

You may ask us to amend or change your health care information if you think it is incorrect or incomplete. If we agree, we will make the amendment to your medical record within thirty (30) days of your written request for change sent to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice. We will then send the corrected information to you or any other individual you feel needs a copy of the corrected information. If we do not agree, you will be notified in writing of our decision. You may then write a statement of your position and we will include it in your medical record along with any rebuttal statement we may wish to include.

You may request a list of any non-routine disclosures of your health information that we might have made within any six (6) year, or shorter, period beginning from April 15, 2003. Routine disclosures would include those used your treatment, payment, and business operations of Clarke D. Newman, OD, PC d/b/a Plaza Vision Center. The routine disclosures listed above will not be included in your list of disclosures. You are entitled to one such list per year without charge. If you want more frequent lists, you must pay for them in advance at a fee of \$75.00 per list. We will usually respond to your written request (made to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice) within thirty (30) days but we are allowed one thirty (30) day extension if we need the time to complete your request.

You may obtain additional copies of this Notice of Privacy Practices from our business office or online at our website address shown at the beginning of this Notice.

CHANGING OUR NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

By law, we must abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices until we choose to change the Notice. We reserve the right to change this Notice at any time. If we change this Notice, the new privacy practices will apply to your existing health information as well as any additional information generated in the future. If we change this Notice, we will post a new Notice in our office and on our website.

COMPLAINTS

If you think that anyone at Plaza Vision Center has not respected the privacy of your health information, you are free to complain to the Privacy Officer named at the beginning of this Notice. We are more than happy to try to resolve any concern you may have in writing or by phone. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights. We will not retaliate against you if you make such a complaint.