

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICE

This document defines your Privacy Rights at St. Louis Eye Surgery & Laser Center as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). For the intent of this notice St. Louis Eye Surgery and Laser Center will be referred to as SLESLC.

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.

SLESLC is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. If you have questions about any part of this notice or if you want more information about the privacy practices at SLESLC, please see the contact information at the end of this document.

I. SLESLC MAY USE OR DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION.

SLESLC collects and protects the privacy of your health information. The law permits SLESLC to use or disclose your health information for the following purposes:

1. **TREATMENT:** SLESLC may use your health information to provide you with medical treatment or services. For example, information obtained from you by a front office personnel or nurse is necessary to determine what treatment you should receive.
2. **PAYMENT:** SLESLC may use and disclose health information to others for purposes of receiving payment for treatment and services that you receive. For example, your health information may be sent to a third party payer such as an insurance company or health plan in order for SLESLC to receive payment for services rendered.
3. **HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS:** SLESLC may use and disclose health information about you for operational purposes. For example, your health information may be disclosed to members of the medical staff, risk or quality improvement personnel, and other to: evaluate the performance of our staff; assess the quality of care and outcomes in your cases and similar cases; and to determine how to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of health care we provide.
4. **INFORMATION PROVIDED TO YOU AND ON YOUR AUTHORIZATION:** You may give us written authorization to use or disclose your health information.
5. **NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY:** We may disclose your health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care about your location, your general condition or in the event of your death. If you are able and available to agree or object, we will give you the opportunity to object prior to making this notification. If you are unable or unavailable to agree or object, our health professionals will use their best judgment in communication with your family and others.
6. **REQUIRED BY LAW:** As required by law, we may use and disclose your health information. For example, SLESLC may disclose health information for the following reasons: judicial and administrative proceedings; to a law enforcement official for purposes such as identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, complying with a court order or subpoena and other law enforcement purposes; to the Department of Health and Human Services to determine if we are in compliance with federal laws; or appropriate persons in order to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a particular person or the general public.
7. **PUBLIC HEALTH:** As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health authorities for purpose related: preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability; report child abuse or neglect; reporting domestic violence; reporting to the Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medications; to aid with disaster relief; and reporting disease or infection exposure.
8. **HEALTH OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES:** We may disclose your health information to health agencies during the course of audits, investigations, inspections, licensure and other proceedings.
9. **DECEASED PERSON INFORMATION AND ORGAN DONATION:** We may disclose your health information to coroners, medical examiners, funeral directors, or to organizations involved in procuring, banking or transplanting organs and tissues.
10. **RESEARCH:** We may disclose your health information to researchers conducting research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board.
11. **WORKER'S COMPENSATION:** We may disclose your health information as necessary to comply with worker's compensation laws.
12. **GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS:** Specialized government functions such as protection of public officials of reporting to various branches of the armed services that may require use or disclosure of your health information.
13. **APPOINTMENTS:** SLESLC may use your information to provide appointment reminders by phone, email, or postal services.
14. **BUSINESS ASSOCIATES:** We work with other businesses to help SLESLC operate successfully. We may disclose your health information to these business associates so that they can perform the tasks we hired them to do. Our business associates must guarantee us that they will respect the confidentiality of your personal health information.

II. WHEN SLESLC MAY NOT USE OR DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION.

Except as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices, SLESLC will not use or disclose your health information without your written authorization.

III. YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION RIGHTS.

1. You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses & disclosures of your health information. SLESLC is not required to agree to the restriction you request.
2. You have the right to receive your health information through a reasonable alternative means or at an alternative location. Requests must be made in writing detailing the alternative methods chosen and could be applicable to fees.
3. You have the right to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your health information for a reasonable fee.
4. You have the right to request that SLESLC amend your health information that is incorrect or incomplete. SLESLC is not required to change your health information and will provide you with information about the denial process.
5. You have a right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your health information made by SLESLC. SLESLC is not required to account for the disclosures described in treatment, payment, health care operations and government functions as described in section I of this Notice. The first accounting of disclosures within a twelve-month period is free. Any additional accountings in that time frame are subject to a fee.
6. You have the right to revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.
7. You have the right to obtain a paper copy of the Notice upon request.

IV. CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES. SLESLC reserves the right to amend this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time in the future. Until such amendment is made, SLESLC is required by law to comply with the Notice. A paper copy of the Notice is available if you request a copy.

V. COMPLAINTS.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, or if you have complaints about this Notice of Privacy Practices contact our privacy officer at:

St. Louis Eye Surgery & Laser Center
12990 Manchester Road, Suite 103 • St. Louis, MO 63131 • Phone (314) 686-4200

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which SLESLC handles a complaint, you may submit a formal written complaint to the Department of Health and Human Services, office for Civil Rights. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services
912 Wildwood • P.O. Box 570 • Jefferson City, MO 65102
Phone (573) 751-6400 • Email: info@health.mo.gov

The Office of Medicare Beneficiary Ombudsman by calling: 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or by visiting the website:
<http://www.medicare.gov/claims-and-appeals/medicare-rights/get-help/ombudsman.html>

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