

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

This Notice tells you about the ways in which Family Vision Center (referred to as FVC) may collect, use, and disclose your protected health information and your rights concerning your protected health information. "Protected health information" is information about you, including demographic information, that can reasonably be used to identify you and that relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition, the provision of health care to you, or the payment for that care.

We are required by federal and state laws to provide you with the Notice about your rights and our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information. We must follow the terms of the Notice while it is in effect. Some of the uses and disclosures described in the Notice may be limited in certain cases by applicable state laws that are more stringent than the federal standards.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

We may use and disclose your protected health information for different purposes. The examples below are provided to illustrate the types of uses and disclosures we may make without your authorization for payment, health care operations, and treatment.

◆ **Payment.** We use and disclose your protected health information in order to pay for your covered health expenses. For example, we may use your protected health information to process claims or be reimbursed by another insurer that may be responsible for payment.

◆ **Health Care Operations.** We use and disclose your protected health information in order to perform our plan activities, such as quality assessment activities or administrative activities, including data management or customer service.

◆ **Treatment.** We may use and disclose your protected health information to assist your health care providers (doctors, dentists, optometrists, pharmacies, hospitals, and others) in your diagnosis and treatment. For example, we may disclose your protected health information about contact lenses fitted or eyeglass specifications.

OTHER PERMITTED OR REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

◆ **As Required by Law.** We must disclose protected health information about you when required to do so by law.

◆ **Public Health Activities.** We may disclose protected health information to public health agencies for reasons such as preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

◆ **Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence.** We may disclose protected health information to government agencies about abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

◆ **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose protected health information to government oversight agencies (e.g., state insurance departments) for activities authorized by law.

◆ **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.** We may disclose protected health information in response to a court of administrative order. We may also disclose protected healthy information about you in certain cases in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process.

◆ **Law Enforcement.** We may disclose protected health information under limited circumstances to a law enforcement official in response to a warrant or similar process; to identify or locate a suspect; or to provide information about the victim of a crime.

◆ **Coroners, Funeral Directors, Organ Donation.** We may release protected health information to coroners or funeral directors as necessary to allow them to carry out their duties. We may also disclose protected health information in connection with organ or tissue donation.

◆ **Research.** Under certain circumstances, we may disclose protected health information about you for research purposes, provided certain measures have been taken to protect your privacy.

◆ **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may disclose protected health information about you, with some limitations, when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.

◆ **Special Government Functions.** We may disclose information as required by military authorities or to authorized federal officials for national security and intelligence activities.

◆ **Workers' Compensation.** We may disclose protected health information to the extent necessary to comply with state law for workers' compensation programs.

OTHER USES OR DISCLOSURES WITH AN AUTHORIZATION

Other uses or disclosures of your protected health information will be made only with your written authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law. You may revoke an authorization at any time in writing, except to the extent that we have already taken action on the information disclosed or if we are permitted by law to use the information to contest a claim or coverage under your insurance.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

You have certain rights regarding protected health information that Family Vision Center maintains about you.

◆ **Right To Access Your Protected Health Information.** You have the right to review or obtain copies of your protected health information records, with some limited expectations. Usually the records include enrollment, billing, claims payment, and case or medical management records. Your request to review and/or obtain a copy of your protected health information, records must be made in writing. We may charge a fee for the costs of producing, copying, and mailing your requested information, but we will tell you the cost in advance.

◆ **Right To Amend Your Protected Health Information.** If you feel that protected health information maintained by FVC is incorrect or incomplete, you may request that we amend the information. Your request must be made in writing and must include the reason you are seeking a change. We may deny your request if, for example, you ask to amend a record that is already accurate and complete.

If we deny your request to amend, we will notify you in writing. You then have the right to submit to us a written statement of disagreement with our decision and we have the right to rebut that statement.

◆ **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures by FVC.** You have the right to request an accounting of disclosures we have made of your protected health information. The list will not include our disclosures related to your treatment, our payment or health care operations, or disclosures made to you or with your authorization. The list may also exclude certain other disclosures, such as for national security purposes.

Your request for an accounting of disclosures must be made in writing and must state a time period for which you want an accounting. This time period may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper or electronically). The first accounting that you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists within the same time period, we may charge for providing the accounting, but we will tell you in advance.

◆ **Right To Request Restrictions on the Use and Disclosure of Your Protected Health Information.** You have the right to request that we restrict or limit how we use or disclose your protected health information for treatment, payment, or health care operations. We may not agree to your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed for an emergency. Your request for a restriction must be made in writing. In your request, you must tell us (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit how we use or disclose your information, or both; and (3) to whom you want the restrictions to apply.

◆ **Right To Receive Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that we use a certain method to communicate with you or that we send FVC information to a certain location if the communication could endanger you. Your request to receive confidential communications must be made in writing. Your request must clearly state that all or part of the communication from us could endanger you. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

◆ **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You have the right at any time to request a paper copy of the Notice, even if you had previously agreed to receive an electronic copy.

◆ **Contact Information for Exercising Your Rights.** You may exercise any of the rights described above by contacting our privacy office. See the end of the Notice for the contact information.

HEALTH INFORMATION SECURITY

FVC requires its employees to follow the FVC security policies and procedures that limit access to health information about members to those employees who need it to perform their job responsibilities. In addition, FVC maintains physical, administrative, and technical security measures to safeguard your protected health information.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change the terms of the Notice at any time, effective for protected health information that we already have about you as well as any information that we receive in the future. We will provide you with a copy of the new Notice whenever we make a material change to the privacy practices described in the Notice. Any time we make a material change to the Notice, we will promptly revise and issue the new Notice with the new effective date.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us and/or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. All complaints to the FVC must be made in writing and sent to the privacy office listed at the end of this Notice.

We support your right to protect the privacy of your protected health information. We will not retaliate against you or penalize you for filing a complaint.

CONTACT FVC

If you have any complaints or questions about the Notice or our want to submit a written request to the FVC as required in any of the previous sections of the Notice, please write to us at the address below:

Attention: FVC Privacy Officer-Kathy Raucci

**Address: Family Vision Center
775 Main St.
Stratford, Ct. 06615
203-377-2020**

**Family Vision Center
101 Boston Ave.
Bridgeport, Ct. 06610
203-333-2020**

Email: Eyeball775@aol.com

This notice is effective April 14, 2003.